BLACKWELL COMPANIONS TO THE ANCIENT WORLD

A COMPANION TO EURIPIDES

EDITED BY
LAURA K. McCLURE

WILEY Blackwell

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Edited by

Laura K. McClure

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List of Abbreviations

This list of abbreviations follows the conventions of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (third edition). They are used throughout the volume when referring to Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and their plays. These and a few other abbreviations of commonly cited works are below.

Aesch.
Aeschylus

Ag.
Agamemnon

Cho.
Choephori or *Libation Bearers*

Eum.
Eumenides

***DFA*^{3}**
A.W. PickardCambridge, rev. J. Gould and D.M. Lewis, *Dramatic Festivals of Athens*, 3rd ed. (1988)

Eur.
Euripides

Alc.
Alcestis

Andr.
Andromache

Bacch.
Bacchae

Cyc.
Cyclops

El.
Electra

Erech.
Erechtheus

Hec.
Hecuba

Hel.
Helen

Heracl.

Heraclidae or *Children of Heracles*

HF
Hercules Furens or *Madness of Heracles*

Hipp.
Hippolytus

IA
Iphigenia in Aulis

IT
Iphigenia in Tauris

Ion
Ion

Med.
Medea

Or.
Orestes

Phoen.
Phoenissae or *Phoenician Women*

Rhes.
Rhesus

Supp.
Supplices or *Suppliant Women*

Tro.
Troades or *Trojan Women*

FGrH
F. Jacoby, *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (1923–)

IG
Inscriptiones Graecae (1873–)

Kannicht
Kannicht, R. (2004), *Fragmenta Tragicorum Graecorum*, vol. V: Euripides. Göttingen.

KA
R. Kassel and C. Austin, *Poetae Comici Graeci*, vol. 1 (1983), 2 (1991)

LIMC
Lexicon Iconigraphicum Mythologiae Classicae (1981–)

PMG
D.L. Page, *Poetae Melici Graecae* (1962)

P.Oxy
Oxyrhynchus Papyri (1898–)

Soph.

Sophocles

Aj.
Ajax

Ant.
Antigone

El.
Electra

OC
Oedipus Coloneus

OT
Oedipus Tyrannus

Phil.
Philoctetes

Trach.
Trachiniae or *Women of Trachis*

TrGF
B. Snell, R. Kannicht, S. Radt (eds.) *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, 4 vols. (1971–85), vol. 1^2 (1986)

PART I
Text, Author, and Tradition

CHAPTER 1
Introduction

Laura K. McClure

Euripides has enjoyed a resurgence of interest in recent years, thanks to important publications on multiple fronts. The longawaited fifth volume of *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* (Kannicht (2004)) makes available an updated and expanded version of the complete fragments of the poet, replacing an outmoded nineteenthcentury edition. The Loeb Classical Library recently added an eighth volume to its Euripides' series, rendering for the first time an extensive collection of the fragments into English translation. A spate of commentaries on the plays and fragments have also appeared in the last two decades, introducing the poet's work to a new generation of students of ancient Greek, including *Medea* (Mastronarde (2002)), *Phoenissae* (Mastronarde (2004)), *Phaethon* (Diggle (2004)), *Alcestis* (Parker (2007)), *Helen* (Allan (2010)) and *Rhesus* (Liapis (2012)). The recent publication of *The Art of Euripides* (Mastronarde (2010)), the first scholarly treatment of Euripides' oeuvre to appear in almost three decades, offers a commendable overview of critical approaches to the poet and nuanced analyses of critical issues such as genre, dramatic structure, the Chorus, religion, rhetoric, gender, and reception across all of the extant plays. Collections of essays, such as *Oxford Readings in Euripides* (Mossman (2003)), have contributed contemporary perspectives on the poet's work to the ongoing critical dialogue. And vibrant new translations of the plays continue to appear in rapid succession. Experimental translations such as *Grief Lessons* (Carson (2008)), which consists of evocative renderings of *Heracles, Hecuba*, *Hippolytus*, and *Alcestis*, convey the excitement of Euripides' poetry while translations specifically geared for performance, such as *Medea* (Rayor (2013)), have helped to bring his plays to modern audiences. *The Complete Euripides* (Burian and Shapiro (2010–2011)) offers the general public contemporary critical introductions and notes to earlier translations of the plays. Even Grene and Lattimore's iconic *Complete Greek Tragedies* series, without a doubt the most widely circulated twentiethcentury translations of the plays in English, has been recently revamped for today's classroom (Griffith and Most (2013)). This flurry of scholarly and creative activity attests to the poet's enduring relevance to the modern world.

This volume is the product of much of this recent work. Many of the essays draw on the texts, commentaries, and scholarship addressed above, as well as the vibrant scholarly dialogue on the poet engendered by conference papers and journal articles over the last two decades. Like the other companions in the Blackwell series, this one is intended for several audiences, from general readers, students and teachers, to the academic specialist. The companion as a genre has the advantage of bringing together a large number and variety of scholars at various stages of their careers all working on a single subject from a wide variety of perspectives. As a result, specific issues and themes begin to emerge across the chapters as central to our understanding of the poet and his meaning for our time. The individual chapters also operate on multiple levels. First, they offer summaries of important scholarship and methodologies,

synopses of individual plays and the myths from which they borrow their plots, and conclude with suggestions for additional reading. Second, they do more than simply look backwards. Instead, they aim to develop original and provocative interpretations of the plays that in turn promise to open up future paths of inquiry. Finally, the individual chapters taken together contribute to a much larger conversation about the place of Euripides in our reception of the classical past and his value in articulating pressing contemporary concerns.

1 Euripides

Euripides' first play, *Daughters of Pelias*, a story from the Medea myth, was produced in 455 BCE at the annual theatrical festival of the City Dionysia just three years after Aeschylus' acclaimed *Oresteia*, and thirteen years after Sophocles' first play in 468 BCE. Euripides was to compete against the latter poet for almost a half century. His last play, *Bacchae*, was produced just after his death in 407/6. Thus by the beginning of his career, the tragic genre had already reached a mature form and a stable foundation from which to experiment. His death, in turn, marked the end of this amazing period of literary history. Little is known of his life and much of the biographical information is unreliable as is so often the case with ancient authors (Scodel, chapter 3). Ancient scholars attributed 92 tragedies of which only 17 are extant (excluding the satyr play, *Cyclops*, and the play probably erroneously attributed to him, *Rhesus*). Fully 70 plays never reached the medieval manuscript tradition. But that is far more than for any other tragedian, thanks to the "happy accident" of the alphabetic plays (Mastronarde, chapter 2). (For comparison, only six authentic tragedies of Aeschylus and seven of Sophocles survive.) Despite 24 productions at the dramatic festivals, Euripides won only four first prizes, far fewer than his tragic colleagues.

More than any other ancient author, Euripides has suffered from distortions of literary criticism, biography, and anecdote. Indeed, a full account of his reception would more than fill one book (for good introductions, see Mastronarde (2010) 1–28; Michelini (1987) 3–51). Since antiquity, Euripidean tragedy has occasioned controversy. The comic poet Aristophanes, in plays such as *Acharnians* (425), *Women of the Thesmophoria* (411), and *Frogs* (405), portrays the poet as debasing the tragic genre and corrupting the morals of his spectators through his innovative lyrics, clever rhetoric, and penchant for sensationalist myth. Aristotle in his *Poetics* takes this criticism a step further, enumerating his dramaturgical defects, such as faulty characterization, irrelevant Choruses, piecemeal plots, and contrived endings, while at the same time upholding Sophocles as the tragic model. The Hellenistic scholars largely reiterated these flaws in their scholia on the plays and so it passed on.

Despite his negative critical reception, Euripides' popularity rapidly eclipsed that of the other two tragedians after his death. His plays were regularly staged both at Athens and abroad as Greek drama rapidly expanded its audience throughout the Mediterranean in the fourth century. In addition, there were virtuoso performances of excerpts from the plays accompanied by new musical forms and dance. Fragments from both fourthcentury tragedy and Middle Comedy show the imprint of Euripides' language and style, while the plot devices of New Comedy, such as recognition, rape, and exposure, and structural elements such as the prologue, clearly

attest to the poet's profound influence on later drama. By the Roman period, familiarity with Euripides served as the mark of the educated class. Roman rhetorical models, such as those of Quintilian, found Euripides more useful than Sophocles for students of oratory while incidents and speeches from his plays provided material for rhetorical exercises.

Ancient sources such as Aristotle, Quintilian, and the scholia influenced modern reception of Euripides, beginning in the sixteenth century. German romanticism propagated a form of classicism that sought aesthetic perfection in both literature and art. According to the Schlegel brothers, tragedy evolved from a primitive stage in Aeschylus and reached its ideal in Sophocles, only to decline in the hands of Euripides. This view followed Aristotle's original criticisms and subsequently found an even more vitriolic outlet in Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* (1872), which identified the poet with a dying and decadent art form. Early twentieth century critical appraisals tended to follow suit, somewhat understandably, since the anomalies of Euripides' technique—his lack of dramatic unity, fondness for rhetoric, political allusions, genre experimentation, mythic innovation, and problematic characters, namely, unmanly heroes and insubordinate women—set him apart from the other tragedians. Early stylistic and formal studies of Euripides represented a turning point in his reception. By elucidating aspects of language, dialogue, and dramatic structure, they moved the focus away from dramaturgical defects to an appreciation of his form and mastery of the complexities of tragic conventions.

2 New Approaches

In the last fifty years, there has been an important critical shift in scholarship on Euripides. Stylistic and formalist studies yielded to explorations of symbolic meanings and systems within the plays, informed by structuralist and semiotic theories. A second popular approach has broadly evolved from historicizing methods and concerns influenced by Marxist, feminist, cultural, and religious studies. These approaches have allowed new and enhanced attention to questions of politics, gender, and sexuality, and the construction of personal and social identity (Mastronarde (2010) 14–15). Deconstructionist readings have also helped to show how Euripides' plays continually resist interpretation, exhibiting an openness of form, structure, and meaning that invites, indeed compels, ancient spectators and modern readers alike to determine their own perspectives on the play's characters and actions. As evidenced in the following chapters, these new methodologies and concerns have profoundly affected the ways we view Euripides' oeuvre and our construction of classical antiquity itself.

3 This Volume

The book is divided into seven sections. Parts I and V–VII cover a broad range of topics central to our understanding of Euripides. Parts II–IV consist of a series of individual chapters dedicated to the treatment of a single play, organized in chronological order (to the extent it can be determined). Part I, "Text, Author, and Tradition," provides an overview of both historical and technical issues: who was Euripides and how has his work come down to us? How did his tragedy resemble and differ from that of the other two tragic poets? Mastronarde (Chapter 2)

traces the history of the transmission of Euripides' plays, from its original composition on papyrus scrolls to Hellenistic and Byzantine copies and finally to modern editions. Scodel (Chapter 3) surveys the evidence for the poet's life as gleaned from the mostly unreliable ancient biographies and anecdotes, which describe him as a womanhating son of a vegetableselling mother, a painterturned poet who died torn apart by wild dogs. Gibert (Chapter 4) addresses the place of the poet in the Greek dramatic tradition as one of continuity and innovation that extended the range of meanings and interpretation of the tragic genre.

The three sections on individual plays are divided into earlier (438 to 416 BCE) and later (415 to 405 BCE) periods. Several leitmotifs recur in the discussions of individual plays that resonate with the broad overviews of form, structure, content, and reception addressed in the final chapters of the companion. One important strand of criticism addresses Euripides' treatment of the emotions. Visvardi (Chapter 5), for example, explores how the poet deploys the contradictory emotions of pity and desire in *Alcestis*, linking them to the tragic and satiric genres to create a hybrid genre that plays with new possibilities of feeling. Ebott (Chapter 8) similarly takes up the portrayal of human emotions in *Hippolytus*, arguing that sympathy counteracts the destructive passions of Phaedra by bringing about the reconciliation of father and son. Marshall (Chapter 13) argues that *Heracles* constructs a new form of heroism, rejecting the gods in favor of a new emphasis on compassion.

Another prominent issue in this section is the interplay between the theater and Athenian political ideology. Goslin (Chapter 7) exposes the uneasy relationship between power and political idealism in Euripides' unsettling play, *Children of Heracles*, while Turkeltaub (Chapter 10) draws a parallel between the war atrocities portrayed in *Hecuba* and contemporary anxieties about abuses of power and the possibility of objective morality in wartime. McClure (Chapter 11) grapples with the question of why Euripides' assigns such a prominent role to mothers in his expression of political orthodoxy in *Suppliant Women*. Moving beyond politics, Swift (Chapter 6) addresses the challenge of Euripidean characterization in her analysis of his most complex and ambiguous character, Medea, whose portrayal continues to divide modern readers and audiences alike. Storey (Chapter 9) rescues *Andromache* from critical obscurity by elucidating how a repeated motif, that of a distressed character rescued unexpectedly, and theme, broken unions, link together the play's three distinct movements. Roisman in turn (Chapter 12) considers the multiple ways that *Electra* destabilizes received mythic tradition, accepted social roles, and gender hierarchies.

A new emphasis on literary selfconsciousness, as expressed by intertextual allusion, mythic variation, and metatheatrical reference, emerges in discussions of some of the later plays included in Part III. Boedeker (Chapter 17) shows how in Euripides' *Helen* unfulfilled expectations, dramaturgical anomalies, and the inversion of familiar tragic patterns create a pervasive atmosphere of uncertainty, thereby underscoring the limitations of human knowledge. Barker (Chapter 19) considers how *Orestes* participates in a double discourse by creating a disjunction between the events enacted onstage and mythic tradition, bringing into conflict the heroic and the contemporary. In *Iphigeneia in Aulis*, the poet similarly confronts the problem of creating a new story within the confines of the mythic tradition and in the process lays bare the ways it call attention to the poet's literary artifice (Torrance, Chapter 20).

Religion is also a critical focus in the later plays thanks to the prominence of gods, priestesses, and cultic aetiologies. Kosak (Chapter 15) explores the ambiguity of divine salvation in *Iphigenia in Tauris* as elusive, morally fraught, and impermanent. Griffiths (Chapter 16) addresses similar questions of divine morality in *Ion* and suggests how references to food and feasting might help counteract psychological suffering.

As in the early plays, there is a similar engagement with female characters and Choruses. Rabinowitz investigates how *Trojan Women* (Chapter 14) reinforces gender norms, arguing against its status as a feminist antiwar tract, a view implicit in many modern performances. Reitzammer (Chapter 21) also focuses on Euripides' representation of women in her discussion of *Bacchae*. She argues that the play problematizes the forms and meanings of Dionysus' worship, and more generally, foreign cults at Athens, particularly their effect on women.

The fourth section, "Satyr, Spurious, and Fragmentary Plays," serves as a kind of catchall for plays that depart in some significant way from the extant corpus. O'Sullivan (Chapter 22) considers the paradoxical characterization of the satyrs in *Cyclops*, the only complete surviving satyr play from antiquity, as encompassing a range of often contradictory identities, by turns playful, ironical, and even pathetic. Liapis' reading of *Rhesus* (Chapter 23) convincingly argues that the play was not composed by Euripides but rather points to "a derivative concoction of a later innovator," probably composed in the fourth century BCE. Collard (Chapter 24) examines the extant fragments, tracing their transmission from antiquity to the modern period and the outlining the process of reconstruction.

Part V, "Form, Structure, and Performance," investigates core issues across a range of texts. Dubischar (Chapter 25) surveys the formal structures and narrative patterns common to Euripidean tragedy, arguing that the two must be seen as closely interrelated. Roselli (Chapter 26) argues that Euripides' tragic form must be considered in the context of performance and social change. In his view, the openness of his dramatic structure and its material effects on performance contributed to his rising popularity at the end of the fifth century. Focusing on another important aspect of tragic form, Murnaghan (Chapter 27) shows how divergent Euripidean Choruses could be, and the depth of the poet's engagement with choral form as a link to nondramatic poetic traditions and the origins of drama. Another aspect of form closely related to performance is the poet's use of music, since productions of Greek tragedy were more akin to modern opera than theater. D'Angour (Chapter 28) examines both metrical and melodic aspects of Euripides' tragedy, and the relation of melody to word pitches. Aristophanes' parodies of Euripides' musical style provides valuable insight into the only direct evidence we have of his melodic practice, a musical papyrus that preserves seven lines of choral song from Euripides' *Orestes* accompanied by instrumental and vocal notation.

Part VI turns from formal matters to address Euripides' engagement with contemporary intellectual, religious, and social issues. Dunn (Chapter 29) explores the ways in which Euripides might have contributed to the intellectual ferment of the late fifth century, including the spread of literacy, the development of specialized skills, such as rhetoric, and progressive new ideas about knowledge, culture, and human agency. Wright (Chapter 30) expands on the

poet's adaptation of myth found in the discussions of individual plays, showing how the poet exploits ambiguities and inconsistencies by contradicting his own earlier treatments of myth. This mythic selfconsciousness, in which characters seem aware that they are characters in a myth, aligns the poet with the philosophical tradition. Fletcher (Chapter 31) explores the varieties of religious experience depicted in Euripides, from representations of the gods, to instances of impiety, ritual practices—some spurious or perverted—and priestesses. Religious activities add a touch of realism while also shaping the dramatic action. Mueller (Chapter 32) traces the history of scholarship on women and gender in Euripides, and the critical methodologies they deploy, and then considers specific female characters in context, including heroic wives, vengeful mothers, female conspiracies, and how they create morally complicated situations with no clear answers.

The final portion of the volume considers the reception of Euripides' plays, a topic that has attracted much scholarly attention in the past decade. This volume includes just four perspectives on how later authors and artists responded to the poet, starting with the comic poet, Aristophanes, and continuing up to the modern era. Worman (Chapter 33) looks at how the comic poet's mockery of Euripides, especially his use of gendered innuendo, targets particular styles of speech associated with the sophists as polished and pliable. This portrait in turn initiates a set of literarycritical conventions that draw on the body's metynomies. Duncan (Chapter 34) examines the popularity of Euripides in the fourth century when his plays were regularly performed both at Athens and abroad, with a particular following in southern Italy, due to his plot elements featuring exotic locations, mad scenes, and controversial heroines. Star (Chapter 35) in turn explores how Seneca detaches Euripidean drama from its original civic and religious contexts and transforms it into a means of confronting the anxieties of the Roman Empire. Seneca's engagement with Euripides' *Phoenician Women*, *Madness of Heracles*, *Trojan Women*, *Hippolytus*, and *Medea*, was instrumental for the transmission of these plays into the Renaissance. Finally, Goff (Chapter 36) examines the meanings of Euripides for the modern era, focusing on contemporary productions both in the US and the UK. She shows how the socalled problems in Euripidean dramaturgy gradually come to be viewed as strengths due not only to ideological shifts but also to a new turn toward performance. In this realm, the plays have attracted avantgarde productions and theatrical practices that form an important part of our understanding of modernity.

4 Conclusion

The Euripides that emerges from these pages is the product of centuries of textual transmission, critical reception, and interpretation. Each culture and period brings to his work new concerns and finds new meanings relevant to their time. Whereas audiences and readers in the early twentieth century, influenced by the burgeoning field of psychology, found in the poet an emotional depth unparalleled by the other tragedians, so today Euripides speaks to our deepening anxieties about a deteriorating global political landscape and profound engagement with questions of personal and social identity. Each generation of readers remakes the poet according to their own time. As a poet "vital to how we understand the classical and its

relevance within the twentieth century" (Goff, Chapter 36), Euripides continually compels us to reflect on our own engagement with the classical world.

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CHAPTER 2
Text and Transmission

Donald J. Mastronarde

The modern reader may encounter the Greek text of Euripides' surviving plays in many forms: in print either in complete editions such as in the Oxford Classical Text series (Diggle (1981–1994)) or in the Loeb Classical Library (Kovacs (1994–2002)) or in separate editions of single plays published with translations or commentaries or both, and in digital form at well known sites on the internet. Despite minor variations in wording and punctuation from one edition to another, modern versions follow certain conventions. The words are separated by spaces and provided with accents, breathing signs, and apostrophes as necessary. Proper nouns and adjectives are usually the only words to be capitalized. Phrases and sentences end in one of four punctuation marks (comma, high stop or Greek colon, period, and Greek question mark). Every time there is a change of speaker, an abbreviated name in the left margin indicates the speaker. Lyric passages are visually recognizable by labeling of stanzaic structure or by characteristic differences in line length. Line numbers are provided at intervals to facilitate reference to the text. In many editions variant readings are reported in an *apparatus criticus*, usually located at the foot of each page. In order to understand why the editions vary in some details and how confidently we can trust these details when analyzing the plays or extracting evidence from them for literary, scholarly, or pedagogical purposes, it is important to know something of the overall story of the transmission of Euripides' works over the course of the twentyfour centuries since his death.

1 The Earliest Copies

When Euripides composed his plays, he is most likely to have written on a papyrus roll, although for rough drafts of small sections he could have used wax tablets, loose papyrus sheets (perhaps even recycled ones), or pottery sherds. In order to produce and direct a play, he and probably the lead actor would have needed a full written copy. Partscripts may have sufficed for the second and third actors and for the Chorustrainer, and an anecdote suggests that the Chorusmembers learned their lines by repeating after the trainer (Kannicht (2004) T 70 = Plutarch, *Mor*. 46B). We do not know whether poets had to submit a text to the archon in order to be granted a Chorus or whether the archon would decide on the basis of an oral proposal or the recitation of some portion of the dramas. Most people will have known plays from attending productions and from hearing and learning recitations of popular selections, and only a few enthusiasts will have been interested in acquiring a written copy of an entire play (Aristophanes, *Frogs* 52–54). We have no papyrus rolls surviving from the period of Euripides' lifetime, but by extrapolating back from some of the earliest bookroll fragments that do survive from the fourth century, we can guess that the fifthcentury copies were written in mostly rectilinear letters similar to those of contemporary inscriptions on stone or of careful

dipinti on vases, with no space between words and no diacritic marks, but perhaps with some sporadic use of interpuncts. The alphabet used was probably the Ionic, since in casual use Athenians had been writing Ionic letters from the middle of the fifth century. Change of speaker must have been indicated in the texts in some way, perhaps already in the way that is apparent in papyri more than a century later.

Whereas the iambic trimeters of tragic dialogue (as well as trochaic tetrameters and the rare dactylic hexameters) must each have occupied a single line even in the oldest texts, the treatment of the lyric passages has been disputed. The traditional view of modern scholarship has been that in the earliest texts of tragedy the lyrics were written in a proselike fashion, in long continuous lines with divisions made between stanzas, in contrast to the later layout of lyrics in shorter metrical units known as "cola" (limbs or members). In the past two decades, various arguments have been offered to support the view that musical annotation and lyrics laid out in cola were transmitted continuously from the author's copy to the Alexandrian tradition on which our medieval manuscripts ultimately depend (Kopff and Fleming (1992)). Many of these arguments do not withstand careful scrutiny, and the available evidence still favors the traditional view (Prauscello (2006) 7–121; a proselike layout of the lyrics is found even in the secondcentury BCE papyrus of *Cresphontes*, P.Köln 10.398).

The century after Euripides' death was immensely significant for the survival and transmission of his work, but evidence is scanty and indirect, and inferences from it very uncertain. At Euripides' death, copies of some of his plays will have been retained by his family (we are told that a son or nephew named Euripides was responsible for producing the posthumous trilogy of *Iphigenia in Aulis*, *Bacchae*, and *Archelaos*), some copies will have been in the possession of acting troupes, and some copies in public circulation among the few who used and collected books at this time. The use of books and private collections of books became more widespread in the fourth century, and fourthcentury poets as well as Plato and Aristotle will have known many earlier poetic works from reading rather than performance (Aristotle in fact speaks of the potential of a wellfashioned tragedy to have its characteristic emotional and intellectual impact through reading alone: *Poetics* 1450b18–20, 1453b3–7, 1462a11–13). With the explosive growth of dramatic performances throughout the Greek world in the fourth century, plays of Euripides were frequently reperformed and the actors' copies sometimes modified. Modern scholars agree that some of these "actors' interpolations" have infiltrated into the manuscript tradition on which our texts depend (and more so in Euripides, because his plays were so popular in the theater after his death), but hold divergent views about the extent to which this has occurred. On one side it has been argued that the books used by readers were regularly derived from the actors' copies (Page (1934) 1–2), and on the other that readers' copies generally had a tradition separate from, but not immune to contamination with, the actors' texts (Mastronarde (1994) 39–49). An intriguing glimpse of the situation emerges from the socalled "Lycurgus decree" (Kannicht (2004) T 218 = Plutarch, *Moralia* 841F). In the aftermath of the disastrous defeat at Chaeroneia in 338 BCE, which brought Macedonian domination to Greek affairs, the Athenian politician Lycurgus devoted his efforts not only to stabilizing the city's finances but also to restoring civic morale by reaffirming the preeminence of Athenian culture. He was able to highlight both the religious piety and the traditional poetic

and intellectual excellence of Athens by measures he took in relation to theatrical performance (Scodel (2007)): he had the Theater of Dionysus rebuilt in stone on a grand scale, erected public statues of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides (thus equating them with political and military leaders as examples of patriotism and civic wisdom), and made a provision for official public copies of the plays of these three tragedians. The decree is reported in abbreviated form in Plutarch, and the text is slightly corrupt, but it appears to say that actors would not be allowed to perform a script that did not match the official copy. We do not know from what sources the official copies were created and with what degree of scrutiny.

2 From Alexandria to Late Antiquity

Hellenistic Greek monarchs sought recognition and prestige by supporting artists, scholars, and scientists, and nowhere was such support stronger than in the Ptolemaic capital Alexandria. An anecdote in Galen (Radt (1977) T 157 = in Hipp. Epid. 3 Comm. 2,4) claims that the Athenian state copies created under Lycurgus were acquired by a Ptolemy (perhaps Ptolemy III Euergetes, 247–221) for the collection of the Alexandrian library (Fraser (1972) I.325; Battezzato (2003b)). For Euripides as for Aeschylus and Sophocles, Alexandrian scholars collected texts of as many plays as they could, comparing their titles to those known from the didascalic records assembled in the previous century. In some cases no copy could be found, since we have reports like that attached to *Medea*, noting that the satyrplay that was part of the same tetralogy produced in 431, *Theristae*, was not preserved. Similarly, if we accept that the *Rhesus* transmitted among the surviving plays of Euripides is actually a fourthcentury drama, Euripides' own *Rhesus* did not reach Alexandria, leaving a gap into which the post Euripidean play was inserted. The editing of tragedies and other poetic texts by Hellenistic scholars generally had the effect of promoting a more standard appearance of these texts. Just as "wild" texts of Homer (those with many verbal variants, additional verses, or truncated passages) came to be replaced by more uniform texts under the influence of scholars who worked in the third and second centuries BCE, so too, it appears, did most tragic texts produced from the second century BCE onward assume a more uniform shape. Although we may speculate that the scholars, when confronted with a radically different version of a play, did not carry forward some obvious interpolations or rewritings, their general editorial policy was to include wellattested lines even if they were not attested in all witnesses and to record their doubts about authenticity in separate commentaries, with marginal symbols accompanying the poetic text to signal to the existence of such comments. In the subsequent tradition such symbols were lost, but the annotations known as scholia, parts of which are ultimately derived from Hellenistic scholarly commentary, sometimes refer to such symbols (ΣSoph. *OC* 237), or mention uneven attestation of a line or passage (Mastronarde (1994) 254–255), or offer the opinion that a passage is not genuine (Σ*Or*. 640, Σ*Tro*. 975). The general uniformity of the colondivisions in lyric passages of tragedy in papyri later than about 200 BCE and in the medieval manuscripts also appears to be the result of the editorial work of the Alexandrian scholars (the name of Aristophanes of Byzantium in particular is associated with this work).

From the third century BCE to the sixth century CE, we have firsthand evidence of the the text

of Euripides in dozens of remnants of ancient copies (for a catalogue and overview, see Carrara (2009)). Euripidean passages have been found on papyrus, parchment, pottery sherds, and wooden tablets (and even on inscriptions: Bousquet (1952) 107; Habicht (1952)). Some of these texts represent selections for use in schools at various levels (from writing practice to rhetorical training), but others are reasonably assumed to come from copies of entire plays. The quality of production varies widely. Some are carefully written by professional scribes, some are more informally or clumsily written by readers or scholars; some are bare of lectional aids or corrections, while others have been provided with corrections, some accents and punctuation, or even brief annotations. We can observe in these texts a number of conventions. Although a speaker may be identified in the margin, especially at first appearance, the normal way to mark change of speaker is with a paragraphos (a horizontal line under the first letters of a line and usually extending somewhat into the left margin), positioned beneath the last line of a character's speech. If there is antilabe (change of speaker within a line, much rarer in tragedy than in comedy), a dicolon (and sometimes also extra space) within the line is used in addition to the paragraphos. As noted earlier, after about 200 BCE, lyrics are divided into shorter units for more convenient and attractive layout and to assist with the recognition of familiar rhythmical patterns within the longer units (metrical periods) that make up a stanza. Moreover, a system of indentation appears to have been common (Savignago (2008)): if the iambic trimeters are taken to provide the normal left margin of the column of writing, certain longer lines, like the trochaic tetrameters, will be written in ecthesis (starting farther to the left than the trimeters) and most lyrics, having been divided into shorter cola, will be written in eisthesis (starting farther to the right than the trimeters). Throughout this period, words are still written continuously, and lectional signs and punctuation are relatively uncommon. The system of accents and breathing signs is attributed to Aristophanes of Byzantium around 200 BCE, but these markings were more commonly added in texts of Homer and nonAttic/Ionic lyric poetry than in texts of the dramatists. When a large number of accents is found in an ancient copy of Euripides, this may suggest either a school exercise or a particularly learned user. Words that are printed as elided in modern editions are treated inconsistently in ancient copies (not only from one copy to another, but also often by the same scribe within a relatively short section of surviving text): the elided vowel may be written out (*scriptio plena*) even though not intended to be pronounced, or it may be omitted, in which case an apostrophe may or may not be written.

The papyri also give us useful evidence for a change in the format of literary texts that had a significant effect on the transmission and survival (or loss) of many ancient Greek texts. Up until the time of the High Roman Empire of the second century CE, the standard form of literary texts was the bookroll or scroll made of papyrus. The visual representation of a bookroll on a tomb sculpture, a mummy portrait, or elsewhere could in fact serve as a sign that the individual portrayed was a welleducated member of the higher strata of society and a participant in the longstanding and widespread Greek cultural tradition. Rolls normally contained one drama only, and the papyri published so far show that in the Ptolemaic and early Roman eras readers in Egyptian cities and villages of modest size had access to about three dozen Euripidean titles. The codex form began to make inroads against the bookroll in connection with highliterary texts as early as the second century CE, and between the second and fourth centuries there is a

shift from a preponderance of bookrolls to a preponderance of the codexform, and by the sixth century the codex has entirely replaced the bookroll (Johnson (2009) 256–267). For Euripides, the earliest fragments of codices are P.Oxy. 47.3321 (*Phoenissae*) and BKT 5.2, pp. 73–79, inv. 13217 (*Cretans*), both of the end of the second century or beginning of the third. Early codices are usually made of sheets of papyrus, but by the fourth century a substantial minority are made from parchment, and the use of parchment increases until it is the predominant material in the seventh century. The significance of the codex form for the transmission of texts is at least twofold. First, it allowed or encouraged groupings of texts by the same author in a single volume. While this made the survival of some groups of works more likely, it also exposed works that were not adopted into collections to a much greater risk of not surviving (Cavallo (1986)). Because we have such tattered remains of Euripidean codices from this period, it is impossible to reconstruct what combinations of plays were collected in these early codices, or whether any of these codices contained just one play. The striking fact is that of 29 or 30 codices from which fragments have so far been published, only three contain plays outside the Euripidean "selection" (discussed below), namely *Cretans*, *Phaethon,* and probably *Melanippe Desmotis*. The plays attested in the other 26 or 27 codices are *Hecuba*, *Orestes*, *Phoenissae*, *Medea*, *Hippolytus*, *Andromache*, and *Bacchae*. We have evidence for the following combinations in the same codex (one codex for each pair): *Phoenissae* with *Medea*, *Orestes* with *Bacchae*, *Orestes* with *Medea*, *Medea* with *Bacchae*. The second effect of the switch to the codex was that this form often provided around each column of text ample margins that could accommodate annotations. Largescale marginal annotations are attested for medical and juristic texts in late antiquity, and for a literary text there is the fascinating case of a sixth or seventh century codex of Callimachus (P.Oxy. 20.2258) with learned comments in the margins. It is thus possible that in this same period the bulk of the older Euripidean scholia were compiled in the margins of a codex of the select plays, but it cannot be ruled out that such compilation occurred instead in the ninth century (Wilson (1983b), McNamee (2007) 91–92, Maehler (1993), Montana (2014); for the scholia on Euripides see Schwartz (1887–1891), Mastronarde (2010)).

3 The Middle Ages

Although the papyrus rolls and early codices give us intriguing glimpses of the text of the Euripides plays up the seventh century CE, the surviving complete plays depend on the medieval textual tradition, which began when copies written in majuscule script and created in late antiquity (or less probably in the culturallyimpoverished period extending from the seventh century into the beginning of the ninth century) were used as the basis for one or more transliterations into the new minuscule script that came into use for literary texts in the first half of the ninth century. The nineteen surviving plays fall into two categories with different paths of preservation. Ten plays (*Hecuba, Orestes, Phoenissae, Medea, Hippolytus, Andromache, Alcestis, Troades* [*Trojan Women*], *Rhesus,* and *Bacchae*) are know as the "select" plays of Euripides. Some have believed that this selection came about by a deliberate choice as early as the second century CE and was coordinated with the selection of seven plays of Aeschylus, seven of Sophocles, and eleven of Aristophanes. Any of these selections could have been

compiled in a pair of codices or perhaps one massive codex. Two other scenarios seem more likely. Either this selection emerged around the fourth century CE and was the end result of the gradual narrowing of the repertoire of plays taught in schools and most often read and copied by cultured readers, plays that were also most likely to have elementary and midlevel (that is, not highly technical and scholarly) commentaries available. Or no single standard selection existed in late antiquity, and the group we call the select plays arose in the ninth century or later when surviving smaller sets were amalgamated. Many of the select plays already emerge as popular in Hellenistic times, as indicated by the proportion of their appearance among the random sample of papyri published so far, and their prominence among the papyri grows in the first centuries of the Roman Empire and becomes overwhelming, though not absolute, in the codices of late antiquity. So the selection may be understood to have arisen from a combination of factors: popularity in the tradition of theatrical performance (whether of whole plays or of excerpts: Nervegna (2007), Gentili (1979)), popularity in the school curriculum, usefulness for rhetorical training, interest of the mythographic content for coverage of different areas of legend and for comparison with Homer and the other tragedians, and availability of suitable commentaries.

Within the selection, we may discern three subdivisions. Almost all medieval manuscripts earlier than about 1300 containing several plays have *Hecuba*, *Orestes*, and *Phoenissae* at the head of the collection (O, Laurentianus 31.10, has *Medea* before *Phoenissae*); these three plays have (with *Hippolytus*) the most extensive scholia and also are extant in far more manuscripts than the other plays. A large number of manuscripts dating from the second Byzantine (or Palaeologan) Renaissance (beginning ca. 1280) and later contain only this triad of plays, which were a staple of the late Byzantine curriculum in ancient poetry. This preference within the curriculum probably reflects practices that extend back much earlier than the thirteenth century, since we can already detect a higher proportion of witnesses of these plays among the papyri of the early Roman Empire and late antiquity. The second subdivision consists of the four plays that occur in varying combinations and varying orders in the major older manuscripts and occasionally are copied in manuscripts of the Palaeologan era and after: *Medea*, *Hippolytus*, *Andromache*, and *Alcestis*. The first three of these are also well attested in the papyri of late antiquity and have ample bodies of scholia (with *Hippolytus* actually surpassing *Hecuba* in density of comment relative to length), while *Alcestis* has survived in fewer witnesses and with relatively scanty commentary. Finally, *Troades*, *Rhesus*, and *Bacchae* have survived much more precariously in few copies, and *Troades* and *Rhesus* have scholia that are even scantier than for *Alcestis*, while *Bacchae* now lacks scholia entirely. The earliest witness of *Rhesus* is O in the twelfth century; for *Troades* it is V, Vaticanus graecus 909, of ca. 1250–1280; and for *Bacchae* we have L, Laurentianus 32.2, (lines 1–755 only) and P, Vaticanus Palatinus graecus 287, both of the first quarter of the fourteenth century, and there is a major lacuna in the final scenes of the play.

The triad plays have the most abundant manuscript basis. In the nineteenth century, and even to a great extent in the work of Alexander Turyn in the midtwentieth century (Turyn (1957)), the assumption was that there was a single transliteration of the select plays into minuscule script in the ninth or tenth century, and that this transliterated copy became the origin of all surviving

copies in an essentially closed tradition. Scholars believed that unusual readings and even apparently correct readings that emerged only in copies from the later thirteenth century and beyond were recent innovations to be ascribed to the carelessness or misguided interventions of middle and late Byzantine scribes or (in the case of probable truth) to clever conjecture by a few of those scribes. Building on the enormous advance in knowledge of Euripidean manuscripts provided by Turyn, studies from the 1960s onward have produced a different picture (Barrett (1964), Zuntz (1965), Di Benedetto (1965), Matthiessen (1974), Mastronarde and Bremer (1982), Diggle (1991)). First of all, as suggested in general terms by Giorgio Pasquali several decades earlier (Pasquali (1952)), the evidence of the papyri (discovered and published since the 1890s) and quotations in other authors (known as the indirect tradition or testimonia) often indicate that the variants found in later Byzantine manuscripts were already in existence in antiquity. Secondly, it was the habitual practice of some ancient readers/scholars and of some medieval copyists to compare copies of a work and to note alternative readings in the margin or place them in the text as corrections of what had first been written. Such intervention disrupts the process of vertical transmission diverging in distinct paths from a single source that is assumed in models of textual tradition that aim to reconstruct an earliest common ancestor or archetype manuscript (stemmatic theory, intended for what is called a closed tradition). For the triad plays (and also for the select plays with a fair number of witnesses surviving), it has been shown that the tradition is an open one, involving "horizontal contamination."

The manuscripts of the triad plays can be classified in several groups. As for other Greek texts, one may distinguish between copies made before about 1280 (older, *veteres*) and after that date (younger, *recentiores*). The conquest of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204 caused a major disruption to Byzantine culture and political power. The imperial center was transferred to Nicaea for several decades until Constantinople was recaptured in 1261 and Michael VIII Palaeologus became sole emperor and founder of the dynasty of Palaelogi that ruled until the final fall of the empire in 1456. This political restoration was soon followed by a renaissance in the collecting, copying, and studying/teaching of classical Greek texts. For some texts, manuscripts copied during the Palaeologan renaissance (that is, during a period of a few decades starting about 1280) are now the oldest available copies, while for others, like Euripides, the younger witnesses bring in a number of variants not found in the extant older manuscripts. Probably, many older manuscripts were recovered at this time from outlying regions of the Byzantine Empire over which the center had precarious control or which had been conquered outright by other powers (Browning (1960)). The *recentiores* of Euripides from time to time are alone in attesting a reading now accepted by editors as true, although they also attest many erroneous readings (often the substitution of glosses or other simplifications, but sometimes also errors that are already attested in papyri). Family groupings of the *recentiores* can be identified, but usually there is ample evidence of horizontal contamination as well, and a witness can change its affinities from one play to another or even within the text of a single play. Special mention should be made of the interesting manuscript V (Vatican graecus 909), which seems to have been produced around 1250–1280, that is, in the period just before the Palaeologan renaissance took hold. Although it is counted by editors as among the "older" manuscripts, it already reflects the sort of philological ambition characterized by that

era, for it contains nine plays of the selection (only *Bacchae* is absent), more than any other surviving witness earlier than 1300, and scholia on all nine plays, some of which are unique to this manuscript. The production of V represents an effort to recover or compile as much as possible from one or more earlier manuscripts, since there are passages in the scholia (e.g., Σ*Or*. 285, 291) which were at first left blank and sometimes completed later, either by more painstaking study of the same exemplar or by consultation of another one.

In this same period of renewed study of classical texts, new sets of scholia were being composed on some of the basic poetic texts studied in the curriculum, which was aimed at those preparing to be teachers, government officials, or leaders in the church and at other members of the elite who were acquiring the cultural background traditional for their social status. In the period 1290–1305 both Manuel Moschopulus (protegé of Maximus Planudes, a learned scholar/teacher and an important collector of rare texts) in Constantinople and Thomas Magister in Thessalonika authored such scholia, which are mostly at an elementary to intermediate level. Turyn argued that these two scholars also produced editions of the text of the triad (two editions in Thomas' case), but subsequent studies have shown that most of the characteristic readings of the manuscripts that carry these scholia are not to be judged deliberate choices of Moschopulus and Thomas and that they did not pay sustained attention to the constitution of the text, although some spelling conventions and a few readings in the Moschopulean manuscripts may reflect scholarly teaching in the circle of Planudes. Thomas' student and successor Demetrius Triclinius was a different kind of scholar, and his importance for the text of Euripides will be treated further below. From 1350 to 1500, the Moschopulean set of scholia was especially popular, so there survive from this period many copies of the triad (or of the first two plays only) containing these scholia or portions of them, although the textual readings in such manuscripts may vary considerably from those in the earliest copies with Moschopulean scholia. These later manuscripts have not yet been fully explored, but are unlikely to add useful new information to what is now known from the *veteres* and *recentiores* and the earliest manuscripts connected to Moschopulus, Thomas, and Triclinius.

For the select plays outside the triad, family relationships among manuscripts can sometimes be detected with greater consistency. For *Hippolytus*, for instance, there are two major groupings, but V cannot be placed in either family. When very few witnesses survive, it is even possible to draw up a stemma with two branches, as Diggle does for *Troades* (Diggle (1981–1994) II.vii), and a similar bifurcated stemma applies to *Rhesus*. The tenth select play, *Bacchae*, presents a special case. It has survived very precariously solely in L (lines 1–755 only) and P, the manuscripts that also carry the nonselect plays of Euripides, to be discussed shortly. It also lacks scholia. Scholars believe that *Bacchae* was last in the collection and so especially subject to the damage and neglect that often befell the latter pages of codices; we can also observe how rarely *Troades* and *Rhesus* were copied and how much shorter their surviving scholia are than those of titles earlier in the collection. The evidence that *Bacchae* originally belonged to the selection and not to the nonselect plays is as follows. First, it has both types of hypothesis or prefatory plotsummary (both a discursive epitome and a laconic version of the type ascribed to Aristophanes of Byzantium), which is elsewhere characteristic only of select plays. Second, *Bacchae* is, along with the other nine select plays, excerpted in a

Vatican gnomology (Barberini gr. 4) that was evidently drawn from a lost manuscript containing ten plays with scholia (the gnomology is reported to carry a scholion on *Ba*. 344: Matthiessen (1965) 156 n. 5). Third, lines from *Bacchae* (as well as from other select plays) are borrowed (verbatim, or with slight modification) in the middle Byzantine (eleventh century?) cento *Christus Patiens* (wrongly ascribed to the fourthcentury church father Gregory of Nazianzus), whereas no line is ever borrowed from the nonselect plays. Fourth, the nonselect plays apparently derive from an alphabeticallyarranged collection, and the title *Bacchae* does not fit the sequence.

The modern Euripidean corpus contains nineteen plays instead of only the ten of the selection because of a happy accident: a separate group of plays somehow survived to be transcribed into a codex in the middle ages if not already at the end of antiquity. These nonselect plays are often called the "alphabetic" plays because the titles come from an alphabetic sequence covering part of epsilon (*Helen*), eta (*Heracles*, *Heraclidae*, *Electra*), iota (*Suppliants* [*Hiketides*], *Iphigenia in Aulis*, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, *Ion*), and kappa (*Cyclops*). It is an attractive speculation that at some point part of a collected edition of bookrolls of Euripidean dramas arranged in alphabetical order, with five rolls each in two rollcases, was noticed by a learned reader or scholar, who arranged for the plays to be copied into a codex (Snell (1935)). On this reconstruction, *Hecuba* would also have been part of the series, to make up a total of ten alphabetic plays, but would not have had to be copied because it was already preserved as part of the selection. In any case, a manuscript of these plays did exist in the middle ages, and a very few Byzantine authors give evidence of having seen or read plays from this manuscript or a related one (Magnelli (2003)). One of those authors was Eustathius, the twelfthcentury commentator on Homer and Pindar, who was also Bishop of Thessalonika for part of his career. It was possibly the same manuscript that Eustathius knew that attracted the interest of Demetrius Triclinius in the first quarter of the fourteenth century, for he is connected to the production of the two manuscripts of that period that proved essential to the preservation of the alphabetic plays to modern times.

These two manuscripts are the famous pair of L and P of Euripides from ca. 1300–1325. L, Laurentianus 32.2, is a less formal scholar's copy produced on paper, probably intended to contain all nineteen surviving plays of Euripides as copied from the source manuscript of the alphabetic plays as well as from sources for the select plays (but *Troades* is absent from L). P, now divided into two pieces, Laurentianus Conventi Soppressi 172 and Vaticanus Palatinus graecus 287, seems to have been intended as a deluxe copy, since it is written on parchment; it does contain all the plays. For over a century scholars have disputed the relationship between L and P in the alphabetic plays, with some arguing that they were both copied from the same source manuscript and some arguing that P was copied from L. After the researches of Zuntz (and the telltale incident of the straw dot in L at *Helen* 95: Zuntz (1965) 13–15), the evidence seems overwhelming that P was copied from L. This relationship has been obscured by the fact that L was revised over a long period of time by Triclinius, who corrected metrical errors in the iambic trimeters, added sparse marginal notations identifying meters, and devoted much effort to restoring the lyrical passages to strophic responsion, because he was the first scholar for several centuries to understand that most of the lyrics in tragedy and comedy consist of

pairs of stanzas having the same metrical pattern and same divisions of cola. Using the color of the ink of the corrections and sometimes the style of the writing, scholars have been able to recognize different stages of Triclinius' work and to see that P was copied from L after the first stage of his work but before the later stages. Because a sufficient number of instances of this situation are secure, it is justified to use the evidence of P to assign some of Triclinius' corrections to the first or later stages when the evidence of the ink in L is ambiguous. (Triclinius' repeated editorial efforts over a period of years, including use of different inks and some changes in writing style, have an exact parallel in his work on the Euripidean triad that survives in T, Angelicus graecus 14.) The consequence of accepting that P is a copy of L is that P need not be cited in an *apparatus criticus* of an alphabetic play except when it gives evidence for the earlier state of L (if that cannot be recovered from L) and when it (accidentally or deliberately) corrects an error of L. This view of L and P is reflected in the modern Oxford Classical Text and Loeb edition and in some of the more recent Teubner editions of individual plays (whereas several Teubners of the 1960s and 1970s followed the theory of P's independence from L).

4 The Lost Plays

About seventy plays of Euripides never reached the medieval manuscript tradition. A few of these were lost very early, as noted above, but some of the lost plays could be read even in late antiquity. For these plays modern study depends on the indirect tradition (quotations in surviving Greek texts), the chance finds of papyri (including fragments both of the plays and of ancient plot summaries), and inferences made from artistic representations, mythographic sources, and allusions in later Greek literature. The evidence will keep growing, but we have an immensely valuable recent resource in Kannicht's 2004 edition of the fragments and testimonia, and even more recent is a fine Loeb edition by Collard and Cropp (2008), in which the fragments are all translated and the reconstruction of each play is carefully assessed.

5 Modern Editions

Given that our oldest manuscripts with complete plays are separated by at least 1400 years from the time of Euripides and that even the majority of the papyri (which carry only random passages, often tattered) are 500 years later than Euripides, and given the process of transmission described earlier, what exactly have scholars had to do to produce the edited Greek text that we read today?

1. Linenumbering was introduced into editions in the second half of the sixteenth century, and because of different layouts of lyrics the numbers differed in different editions until editors began conforming (more or less) to a single convention from the later nineteenth century on. Some ancient copies were numbered at every hundredth line (stichometric numbering), but this seems to have been a record of how much work a professional scribe had done, to justify proper payment, and not any kind of aid to reference.
2. The separation of words is sporadically implied in ancient copies by punctuation or

accents or is remarked on in scholia. Consistent separation of words does not occur until the medieval period (and the earliest minuscule manuscripts still lack it), and the separation may be erroneous and require editorial intervention: for example, in *Medea* 272 *Mēdeian eipon* is written in the manuscripts, but this is better redivided as *Mēdei' aneipon*.

3. Punctuation was either sporadic or inconsistent in ancient copies and many medieval manuscripts. Thus editors need to weigh carefully how to punctuate, deciding whether a line is a question or a statement or what phrases to take as parenthetic (Diggle (1994) 428–429).

4. Diacritic marks are absent or sporadic in ancient copies, but become universally applied shortly after the transition to minuscule writing. Modern editors may need to adjust the diacritics. For instance, many occurrences of the contracted reflexive *hautou* (*h* representing rough breathing over *au*) (< *heautou*) are written as *autou* (with smooth breathing over *au*) in the manuscripts, or the word *menei*, though accented by scribes with acute on the first syllable (present indicative), may need to be corrected by editors to future indicative by changing the accent to circumflex over the second syllable.

5. The ancient practice of *scriptio plena* where elision is implied sometimes misled scribes to believe there was a hiatus that needed to be removed, but the consonant they introduced created a metrical fault (as in *IA* 68, where *didōsi* became *didōsin*, or in *Helen* 1660, where *hēssone* became *hēssones*).

6. Since the Greek language and conventions of spelling have changed gradually over time, editors attempt, with the help of inscriptions and other evidence, to restore a spelling that they believe late fifthcentury Athenians would have used when writing in the Ionic alphabet. For instance, (a) iota adscript or subscript is always included in the socalled long diphthongs, though the iota is often absent in papyri and medieval manuscripts; (b) *gignomai* and *gignōskō* are printed instead of the postclassical forms *ginomai* and *ginōskō* that are common in the tradition; (c) the firstperson singular imperfect "I was" is printed as *ē* except where *ēn* is required to avoid hiatus, although manuscripts mostly carry the latter; (d) most editors print the preposition *es* except where meter requires *eis*, even though the latter is what is attested almost everywhere in papyri and manuscripts. (For more on orthographic restorations made by editors, see Mastronarde and Bremer (1982) 174–177, Mastronarde (1988) xxii–xxv, West (1990) xxxvi–liii, Finglass (2009).)

7. As noted earlier, changes of speaker were often marked in ancient copies with no more than a paragraphos, which could easily be omitted or slightly misplaced in copying. The identification of the speakers was even more precariously transmitted. Thus, editors need to consider what speaker changes to accept or reject (as in *Orestes* 271–284, where some or all manuscripts make Electra intervene several times in what we now accept is one continuous speech by Orestes; is *Medea* 945 a continuation of Jason's 944, or the leadin to Medea's 946?) and to which speaker to assign particular lines (are *Hippolytus* 1389–90 spoken by Artemis or the Chorusleader?).

8. Editors may choose to divide the lyric cola somewhat differently from the manuscripts, either because they prefer a different metrical analysis or because the division in the manuscripts seems to have been suffered some common forms of modification during transmission (Mastronarde and Bremer (1982) 151–155; Parker (2001)).

Written texts copied repeatedly over a long period of time are subject to various kinds of corruption of wording or physical damage. One goal of the editor of an ancient Greek text is to detect problems in the transmitted text or to decide between variants presented by the tradition. Texts of Euripides prepared by different editors present somewhat different versions because, despite certain shared principles of philological and editorial method, there is ample room for differing personal judgments about the contours and limits of grammatical and stylistic variation as well as about the degree of logic or consistency to be expected from a poet in dramatic construction or from a character in argumentation and selfpresentation. Likewise, the line separating suspicions an editor feels need to be recorded for consideration in an *apparatus criticus* or commentary from textual alterations that in an editor's judgment deserve to be printed in the text will be placed at different points on a spectrum of possibilities. Such matters of editorial judgment include decisions about when and where to mark interpolations as well as which variant to favor and when and where to accept an emendation. In general it can be said that the more independent manuscripts survive for a play, the greater likelihood there is that an editor will often be able to adopt one of the transmitted variants and will less often have to resort to significant emendation; conversely, the fewer manuscripts survive, the greater the chance that the truth has been lost from the stream(s) of tradition we have. Accordingly, the alphabetic plays are in general more corrupt than the select plays (or especially than the first seven plays of the selection) and require more conjectural emendation. Editions also differ because some may on principle leave the most difficult problems marked with the obelus as corrupt (possible solutions will usually appear in the *apparatus*), while others, in order to meet the needs of students or to express the personal preference of an editor, may use the obelus as little as possible and almost always accept in the text one emendation or another.

The modern publication history of Euripides begins around 1495 with the printing by Alopa in Florence of a volume containing the four plays *Medea*, *Hippolytus*, *Alcestis*, and *Andromache*. The first nearly complete edition emerged from the Aldine Press in Venice in 1503: its title page claims seventeen plays, but it actually contains eighteen, lacking only *Electra* (first printed in 1545). The earliest edition of Euripides to apply stemmatic theory and seek the evidence of the oldest known manuscripts was that of A. Kirchhoff (1855). As was usual in the nineteenth century, editors of Euripides went too far in assuming a closed tradition and discounting almost all later manuscripts. Minor improvements were made in the accuracy of reports of manuscript readings in some subsequent editions (especially in PrinzWecklein 1883–1902), but thorough knowledge of the complexity of the tradition did not come until the work of Turyn (1957) and of the scholars who followed up and reacted to his claims. Of the currently available complete editions the Oxford Classical Text of James Diggle (1981–1994) contains the fullest and most reliable *apparatus criticus*, although on some details advanced students will sometimes want to check the *apparatus* in one of the more recent Teubner

editions of individual plays as well. Both Diggle and David Kovacs, editor of the Loeb edition (a valuable replacement for the embarrassing early twentiethcentury Loeb), tend in the direction of a firm interventionism: they print more emendations and mark more lines as inauthentic (and Diggle marks more uncured corruptions) than many other Euripidean scholars would do. An opposite tendency toward excessive confidence in the transmitted text can be observed in some of the older Teubner editions of single plays. Various gradations along the spectrum in between can be observed in commentated editions of individual plays in English, German, and Italian.

Effective consultation and exploitation of the text of Euripides by students and scholars thus require both an awareness of the often precarious course it has traveled since the author's day and a willingness to pay attention to the *apparatus criticus* and to consult commentaries and other editions in difficult or controversial passages.

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FURTHER READING

For a general treatment of the history of tragic texts in antiquity and the role of scholars in their preservation and transmission, the classic treatment of Wilamowitz (1895) 121–220 is still deserving of attention. For a more recent treatment consult Griffith (1977) 226–234, and in general Pfeiffer (1968) and Reynolds and Wilson (2013). For more on the role of scholars of Byzantine times see Wilson (1983a). For a general introduction to textual criticism and editing of Greek and Latin texts see West (1973), and for some specific examples of textual criticism of Euripides see Diggle (1994). For descriptions of the nature and achievements of editions of Euripides from the early sixteenth century to modern times, see Diggle (1981–1994) I.v–xi; Kannicht (1969) I.119–129.

CHAPTER 3
The Euripidean Biography

Ruth Scodel

1 What We Know

Apart from some dates of productions and victories in the dramatic competitions on one side, and the general history of Athens during the fifth century on the other, we really know very little for certain about the life of Euripides. From his plays, we can infer a great deal about his intellectual life, and because he was such a favorite target of Aristophanes and other comic poets, we can to some extent rely on arguments from silence. So we can be reasonably sure that he did not hold major public office, although he may have served as an ambassador. His love of nautical imagery says that he probably loved the sea, and he probably liked to watch or play the board game called *pessoi*, since he uses metaphors from it. He had some interest in architecture, and was profoundly engaged with the intellectual life of his time in all its forms—natural science, rhetoric, ethics, anthropology, and religion. Aristophanes' *Frogs* mockingly associates him with bookrolls (943, 1409), and the Chorus that praises peace in *Erechtheus* sees reading as one of its joys (fr. 369 Kannicht; Collard, Cropp, and Lee (1995)).

2 The Poetic Career

We know a fair amount about his career, though even here much is uncertain. His first production at the Dionysia was in 455 BCE. He was first victorious in the tragic competition at 441. He was second in 438, third in 431, victorious in 428, second in 415. He won only five times, and one of those was posthumous. He died in 407/6. Ancient scholars knew of 92 plays, but only 78 were preserved at Alexandria, and of these three were of doubtful authenticity. Many that did not survive to Alexandria were probably satyrplays, a genre Euripides apparently did not enjoy and in which he did not excel. One extant tragedy, the *Rhesus*, is now thought by most scholars to be spurious, although Euripides wrote a play with that title. Not all his plays were produced at Athens (and a few may have appeared at Athens but at local festivals), but that still gives as many as 22 productions in a fiftyyear career. We should not assume that he was unpopular because he rarely won, for he competed almost as often as Sophocles. Each year a public official, the archon, selected three tragedians for the festival, and there is no evidence that Euripides ever failed to be chosen.

Plutarch twice quotes an ode for Alcibiades' Olympic chariotvictory in 416—with multiple chariots, Alcibiades placed first, second, and either third or fourth—that was attributed to Euripides (PMG 755; Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 11.2–3, *Demosthenes* 1.1.2; Athenaeus refers to it at 1.3E), though Plutarch expresses some uncertainly about the attribution. Plutarch also reports that Euripides wrote a lament for the Athenian dead in Sicily, and quotes two lines (*Nic*. 17.4) of elegy, in which the dead are said to have won eight victories over the Syracusans as long as

divine favor was equally distributed.

3 Ancient Biographical Traditions

We know little or nothing about Euripides' inner life, about who his friends were, about his political affiliations or lack of them, except what we can infer from his plays or, ever cautiously, from comedy. This may seem surprising, since a rich ancient biographical tradition survives. We have extensive papyrus fragments of a "Life of Euripides" by the Hellenistic biographer Satyros (part of a work on the biographies of all three canonical tragedians). This is a fascinating text, in dialogue form (one of the interlocutors is a woman), and it thereby avoids responsibility for its contents; it defines Euripides' life as a subject of debate. Some of the manuscripts of the plays include a biography—actually five separate pieces, two of which are based on Satyros, while 1A and 3, as well as the article in the Byzantine encyclopedia called *Suda*, and a biographical sketch by Aulus Gellius, all used the same biography, known as "Q" for "Quelle" (the numbering is that of Kannicht 2004). There are also anecdotes in various ancient authors, and a short biography by the Byzantine scholar Thomas Magister that may be partly independent of the others.

However, the biographies are mostly fiction. They take jokes in comedy literally, assume that the dramatist's characters represent his personal life, and treat poets as if they themselves were legendary figures whose lives fall into the patterns of folklore. They also assume that poets' works have prophetic qualities. According to the biographical tradition, Euripides was torn apart by wild dogs. The tale is obviously based on the death of Pentheus in the *Bacchae*. The late fourthcentury historian Philochorus had to point out that a lament in Euripides' *Palamedes* could not be a rebuke to the Athenians for executing Socrates, since Euripides died before Socrates (328 fr. 221 *FGrH*). Euripides' biography has been further distorted by a tendency to contrast it as much as possible with that of Sophocles. Sophocles was widely loved and charming, so Euripides must have been hated and unsociable. Sophocles liked both boys and women, so Euripides liked only women.

We ourselves can use comic jokes as biographical sources, but critically. Similarly, although the fashion now is to reject as much of the biographical tradition as possible, this is probably too extreme. The tragedians were famous men, and Heraclides of Pontus, a philosopher of the Academy, wrote about them in the fourth century (we do not know what kind of book this was). We need to be especially suspicious not only of obviously folkloric and comic material, but also of stories that confirm the general tendencies of a biography. However, we can use the material in the biographical tradition as long as we are rigorously critical at all times, considering the likely source of each item. When we remove the fiction, we have two kinds of information: the actual records of production on one side, and gossip on the other. Anecdotes, especially those that are attested within a century of the poet's life, provide gossip—not the exact truth, but at least the kind of thing contemporaries and nearcontemporaries said. The biographies, though, are fascinating in another way, for they show how some ancient scholars imagined Euripides: it is possible, for example, to recognize which characters they thought were selfportraits. This essay will try both to identify what we can believe about Euripides'

life, and what we can understand about how his biographical tradition reflects his significance in antiquity.

For example, the biographies say that Euripides was born on the day of the battle of Salamis in 480, and even that fear caused his mother to go into labor. Since Euripides is generally associated with the island of Salamis, although it was not his family deme, it is not surprising that his birth should be connected with the battle. The date is also suggestive, because the synchronism implies a link between Euripides and Greek patriotism, an identification of Euripides as a poet who embodies his time. The Marmor Parium (239 A 50 *FGrH*) puts the birth of Euripides in the year of Aeschylus' first victory, 485/4, an equally symbolic association.

There is a repeated jibe in Aristophanes that makes fun of Euripides' mother as a vegetable seller. The first biographical segment (1A) opens by stating that Euripides was the son of the vegetableseller Kleito and the petty trader Mnesarchides. IB, however, begins by saying that the poets of Old Comedy *say* that his mother was a vegetableseller. So in this case the comic source of the pseudoinformation is both known to modern scholars directly and explicit in the biographical tradition. The *Suda* explicitly denies this story on the evidence of Philochorus (328 F. 218 *FGrH*). Aulus Gellius records it on the authority of Theopompus (it is unclear whether this is the historian or the comic poet). Thomas Magister follows the life 1A. The working mother makes no sense when combined with another item belonging to this tradition, that Euripides' father misunderstood an oracle promising his son victories and so had him trained as an athlete (1A.2, Gellius, Thomas Magister), since only aristocrats could afford to have their sons trained. The misunderstood oracle, in its turn, is folklore and makes the tragic poet more like a tragic character.

Modern scholars have done their best to make sense of the allegation about Euripides' mother (Olson (2002) 196–97, on Aristophanes' *Acharnians* 478). The joke is clearly self sustaining; Aristophanes uses it at *Frogs* 840, after Euripides' death, when his mother would have had to be at least ninety if she was alive (it has been suggested that the joke was actually about a young stepmother, but even a stepmother would have had to be an old woman by the production of *Frogs*). Most members of the audience would not remember whatever originally prompted the insult, but only its earlier appearances in comedy. It is interesting, though, that all the passages mocking Euripides' mother are primarily about Euripides' tragic style. In *Acharnians*, Aristophanes' oldest surviving play, Dicaeopolis concludes his requests of Euripides by begging for the herb *scandix* from his mother (478), and so attaches the mother's work to the son's presentation of ragged, rhetorically skilled heroes, the main theme of the scene. The vegetable seller is lowerclass and collects wild and often bitter herbs (*scandix* is bitter and pungent, according to Dioscurides *On Medical Material* 2.138); Euripidean tragedy lowers the register. A woman in *Women at the Thesmophoria* says that he does the women "wild harm" because he was reared amid "wild" herbs (455–56). In *Frogs* the running joke lies behind Euripides' medicinal purgatives for tragedy (942–43). That is, whatever may originally have started the slander about Euripides' mother, it survives in comedy because the genealogy fits the comic Euripides, and it surely survives in the biographical tradition, despite its implausibility and the attempts of ancient scholars to refute it, because it made sense to

audiences as literary criticism. The slander is most interesting because it does not do what we might expect. Euripides is consistently associated with rhetorical cleverness of a kind typically located in the city, and a woman who sold herbs or vegetables would presumably be a marketwoman; yet Aeschylus in *Frogs*, referring to the slander, calls Euripides "son of the *rustic* goddess" (840). The emphasis on the slander is on the herbs, not the marketplace. Euripides' poetry is country food (Roselli (2005)).

He came from the deme Phlyae. According to Theophrastus' *On Drunkenness* (T 33b), he was winepourer in a ritual in which elite Athenians danced around the shrine of Delian Apollo; Theophrastus cites a written record about this ritual at the Daphnephorion in Phlyae (he may have taken this from Philochorus). 1A.4 says that he was torchbearer for Apollo Zoster. Such ritual functions imply upperclass birth, and they also suggest that Euripides was better integrated socially, more a normal Athenian, than the biographical tradition allows.

We have absolutely no idea how Euripides became a tragedian. His first competition at the City Dionysia was in 455. Usually, the lives of poets tell how the poet became a poet, either by a supernatural meeting with the Muses or Apollo (the poetic "initiation") or by learning from earlier poets. The other tragedians' biographies give them entirely human paths to tragedy: the life of Aeschylus says he learned tragedy from childhood, and that of Sophocles says that he learned from Aeschylus. Euripides' biographies follow a different pattern. He typically has a "false career" as either an athlete or as a painter. For example, Life 1A says, "They say that at first he became a painter, but studying with Archelaus the scientist and Anaxagoras he set his course for tragedy." In 1A, IB and *Suda*, he is first a painter (1A says that some of his paintings were displayed in Megara). In 1B he turns from painting to tragedy under the influence of Anaxagoras and Archelaus. In *Suda* he follows his painting career by becoming a student of Prodicus and Socrates, but also Anaxagoras, and he becomes a tragedian after seeing Anaxagoras in danger for his teachings (chronologically impossible). In IA, Gellius, and Thomas Magister he is an athlete, and wins local victories. In Gellius, he turns from athletics to become a student of Anaxagoras, Prodicus, and Socrates, and in Thomas Magister he studies with Anaxagoras, Prodicus, and "some others" immediately following his turn from athletics to words and speeches.

The two false careers seem basically alternatives in a folklore motif. The choice of painting surely reflects an appreciation of the visual acuity of Euripidean imagery, and possibly attention to ecphrastic passages and those in which characters refer to painting; perhaps it indicates more broadly an association of Euripidean "realism" with developments in classical art. As for athletics, it appears—if we, more cautiously than the biographical tradition, draw inferences from the plays—that Euripides loathed athletes. The antiathletic tirade from *Autolycus* (fr. 282) and fr. 201, spoken by Amphion in *Antiope*—a character easy to treat as the author's surrogate—point the same way.

While only one source, 1B, has Euripides actually change from one career to another through philosophy, all the biographies that include a false career make the study of philosophy (and sometimes rhetoric) the next stage. Satyros says that he [something] Anaxagoras (37.col. 1.25) "amazingly," and in fr. 6 (39.col. 4. 30) speaks of his admiration for Socrates, interpreting a

passage of *Danae* as praise of Socrates. So one function of the theme of the false career is to sharpen Euripides' philosophical side. The move from philosophy to poetry is in one line of the tradition prompted by seeing the danger to Anaxagoras. Now according to Satyros, Anaxagoras was prosecuted for impiety and medizing by Thucydides son of Melesias, a famous politician and opponent of Pericles. (If the prosecution of Anaxagoras actually took place, which is uncertain, it was probably political, an indirect attack on Pericles.) Sotion, however, a Hellenistic author of biographies of philosophers, said that Anaxagoras was prosecuted by Cleon (Diogenes Laertius *Anaxagoras* 12). Cleon shows up in Satyros as the prosecutor of Euripides (for impiety, certainly a fiction). It is possible that both the Cleon stories come from different interpretations of comic references to Cleon's prosecuting somebody, but I think they also demonstrate how close the biographical tradition comes to making Euripides a philosopher. The lives of philosophers describe conversions, while those of poets have initiations, but Euripides is more like a philosopher than a poet.

The biographical tradition (1A and Thomas Magister) gives him two wives, Choerine or Choerile and Melito, and three sons, Mnesarchides (who became a merchant), Mnesilochus (an actor), and Euripides. However, Euripides' marital life is especially hard to clarify. It is a standard theme of the biographical tradition that he hated women, and Aristophanes' *Women at the Thesmophoria* is treated as a historical source for an assembly of women against Euripides. The hatred for women is an interpretation of the work as filtered through comedy. So the biography says that he married Choerile and then wrote his first *Hippolytus* and divorced her because she was unfaithful, but then married another woman who was even worse.

There was, however, some kind of sexual scandal about Euripides, probably involving adultery by his wife. When he says, in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, that there was no presence of Aphrodite in Aeschylus, Aeschylus replies, "She put herself in full force on you and yours, and in fact she overturned you yourself" (1046–47). Dionysus then comments that this is true, and that Euripides was a victim of exactly what he had composed about other men's wives. The discussion is about Phaedra and Stheneboea, which are both "Potiphar's wife" stories, in which a woman tries to seduce a man, fails, and then accuses him of raping her. Euripides used this plot a number of times (two versions of *Hippolytus*, *Stheneboea*, *Phoenix*), but it would not be wise to assume, as an ancient biographer would, that his experience was exactly that of his characters. One anecdote in Stobaeus (6.6.18) has someone call Euripides a womanhater, and Sophocles answers, "Well, not in bed" (Sophocles himself was famously susceptible to both boys and women). Evidently there was gossip about Euripides' wife.

Aristophanes also, in the *Frogs* and in a fragment from a lost play, jokes about a person named "Cephisophon" who helps Euripides write plays and lived with him "mostly." According to a scholium on *Frogs* 944, the comic poets also said that Cephisophon was the lover of Euripides' wife, although no such slanders are extant. The scholium and biography think Cephisophon was a slave, but he is more likely to have been an actor. In the biographical tradition, we then find the story that Euripides, frustrated at Cephisophon's relationship with his wife, either began cohabiting with Cephisophon's wife to even the score, or divorced his wife. "Choerine" is an attested Athenian name, but it could easily be used for obscene puns. So

scholars disagree about what is most likely: that he actually was married twice, that he had one wife, named “Choerine,” or that he had one wife, named “Melito.” It is impossible to know. If Euripides divorced his wife, and gossip said that Cephisophon was her lover, but Euripides continued to associate with Celphisophon, the wifeswapping story is an obvious development. The misogyny is itself a comic exaggeration—his plays are as full of evil women, but they represent many exceptionally virtuous and sympathetic women, too.

There is, however, another bit of scandal in a story told at Athenaeus 604d–f, where a boy steals Sophocles’ cloak and Euripides mocks him. Sophocles responds with an obscure epigram in which he seems to accuse Euripides of adultery.

4 Misogyny and Misanthropy

According to Satyros, everybody disliked Euripides: women because his plays made them look bad, men because he was unsociable. He is supposed to have composed his plays in a cave on Salamis. Philochorus (328 fr. 219 *FGrH*) already mentioned the cave; in the Roman period the alleged cave was a tourist attraction, and Aulus Gellius, who visited, describes it as utterly nasty. In one version of the biography (3.1) it immediately precedes and clearly introduces the description of Euripides as a misanthrope. In Satyros, though, it represents philosophical/poetic grandeur of character. By himself in the cave, Euripides spends his time “always pondering and writing something, in contempt for all that was not great and serious.”

Euripides goes to the cave, according to 1B, to escape the crowd:

> They say that he fitted up a cave in Salamis that caught the seabreeze and would spend his days there, escaping the mob. That is why most of his comparisons come from the sea. He seemed sullen and gloomy and withdrawn and not given to laughter, as Aristophanes criticizes him, “grim to talk to, at least for me.

It is hard to believe that Euripides had no sense of humor, since his plays are often funny. One reason for this emphasis on Euripides’ unfriendly personality may be the ongoing contrast with Sophocles, whose biography makes him the most genial person in the world.

The cave does not appear in comedy, although in *Acharnians* Dicaeopolis visits Euripides’ house. In this case the argument from silence is powerful, since Euripides was a favorite target of Aristophanes and other comic poets and the cave would have been an irresistible eccentricity. A comic poet could, of course, have mentioned it in a lost play, but it was clearly not a standard theme. In an anecdote related by the early Hellenistic poet Machon, Euripides is sitting in a garden with his writingtablet when he is interrupted by a Corinthian courtesan (402–10). Actually, the comic Euripides, although he resents being harassed by Dicaeopolis, is not misanthropic. Several philosophers have associations with caves. So there is every reason to doubt the story.

Still, Philochorus would not have invented the cave—the story must have been current not long after Euripides’ death. The Peristeri cave has been excavated, and there is some fifthcentury pottery in one of its chambers. It is not, however, pleasant inside. There is also a late fifth

century cup on which someone in Hellenistic or Roman times wrote “Euripides,” probably as a dedication, before leaving it there as an offering to the poet.

> This emphasis on escaping the crowd recalls Euripides’ Hippolytus in *Hippolytus*:
>
> I am clumsy at giving an explanation to a crowd, but more intelligent for a small group of men my own age. And this follows norms of apportionment, since those who are inadequate among the intelligent are more “musical” at speaking in a crowd.
>
> (986–89)

The biographical tradition seems to have seen Hippolytus as a representative of the author. Euripides’ misogyny is a major theme of the whole biographical tradition. What is striking, though, is that while Euripides composed several plays with “bad women” at their center, the most extensive actual tirade against women that we know about is in, again, the extant *Hippolytus*. Furthermore, Hippolytus’ servant discusses with him the virtue of not being *semnos*, “stuckup”:

> *Servant*:
>
> [People] hate what is *semnos* and not friendly to everyone.
>
> *Hippolytus*:
>
> Rightly so: who that is *semnos* isn’t annoying?
>
> *Servant*:
>
> And is there charm in approachable people?
>
> *Hippolytus*:
>
> A great deal—it’s profitable with small effort.
>
> (93–96)

Although Hippolytus agrees with the servant, the servant regards his attitude to Aphrodite as *semnos*, and Theseus agrees: “I proclaim to everyone to flee people like this. They go hunting with highsounding [*semnos*] words, but they contrive disgusting acts” (956–57). That is, it seems that Hippolytus is one of the characters from whom the biographical tradition builds Euripides. Of course, Hippolytus is hardly misanthropic. He agrees with the servant that it is good to be socially affable, and actually has a secondary Chorus of his friends following him around. The dramatic character is only one source of the imagined Euripides, who has been merged with the stereotype of the misanthropic and solitudecraving philosopher.

Hippolytus, however, has no associations with caves. The *Philoctetes* of Sophocles lives in a cave, and the cave with a pleasant breeze probably derives from somewhere in Euripides’ lost works. Indeed, Euripides’ *Philoctetes* could have been another text that ancient readers interpreted as a selfportrait (*testimonia* and fragments 73 Kannicht (2004), frs. 787–803; or Collard, Cropp, and Gibert (2004) 1–34). We do not have enough evidence to say anything

precise about how Euripides developed the character, but he must have been set in sharp contrast to Odysseus, who spent the prologue meditating on his own ambition—a characteristic the biography says Euripides did not have. In Euripides' play, Philoctetes, abandoned on Lemnos by the Greeks on their way to Troy, was visited by an embassy from the Trojans who sought him as an ally, while Odysseus in disguise presented the other side. Evidently, the hero refused the pleas of the Trojan Embassy, but he cannot have been persuaded by the disguised Odysseus' patriotic arguments either, since otherwise the play would have ended after the debate, and we know that it did not. So he seems to have been disaffected, unwilling to participate on either side. He must have preferred to stay on the island, where he had one Lemnian friend. The combination of island, probably with a cave, and rejection of public life looks like a possible model for the Euripides of the tradition. Amphion in *Antiope* in another. He prefers the unpolitical life (193, 194 Kannicht and Collard, Cropp, and Gibert (2004, 276–7)), but he also argues that wisdom is the most valuable asset in political affairs, while the combination of foolish ignorance and the crowd is the worst evil (200 Kannicht and Collard, Cropp, and Gibert (2004), 278–79).

Aristotle says at *Politics* 1311b23, in a catalogue of attacks on monarchs and their causes, that Decamnichos became the leader of a coup against Archelaus (the king of Macedon at whose court Euripides spent the last years of his life). Archelaus had handed him over to Euripides to be flogged, because Euripides was angry that Decamnichos had said something about his bad smelling mouth—although Archelaus was only assassinated in 399 and Euripides died by 407/6. The bad breath is found elsewhere, in Satyros (6.39 col. XX), in the biography 3, and in Stobaeus 3.41.6. In Satyros' version it (probably) still takes place at the court of Archelaus, and Archelaus speaks in Euripides' defense, but there is no trace of vengeance from Euripides. In the biography, a boy prompted by *phthonos* (envy or resentment) comments on Euripides' mouth, and since the preceding section has concerned the *phthonos* against Euripides at Athens in contrast with the admiration in which foreigners held him, it seems to belong there. In both the anecdote in Stobaeus and in the *vita*, Euripides himself makes a snappy comeback. In the biography, he says that his mouth is full of "honey and Sirens," which seems to be a quotation from the Hellenistic author Alexander Aetolus, who contrasts Euripides' poetry with his unpleasant and antisocial personality (fr. 7 Magnelli). In Stobaeus, asked why his mouth smells bad, Euripides answers that it is because so many things that cannot be said have rotted in it. This evokes the story in *Suda* that Euripides became a tragedian because he saw the dangers to which Anaxagoras' doctrines exposed him (T 3.2). There are things Euripides knows that he cannot talk about, and it is this superior knowledge that has led to his isolation. The bad breath, like the cave, divides Euripides from other people, but this separateness can be valued in different ways. It can serve, like the ugliness of Socrates in Plato's *Symposium*, to represent the difference between superficial appearance and profound inner value, or as a focus for *phthonos*.

Aristotle's story appears nowhere in the later biographical tradition. Euripides' angry behavior did not fit Satyros' view of his lofty character, so it is not surprising that it does not appear there. But Aristotle's father, according to his biographical tradition, was a doctor at the Macedonian court, and Aristotle himself was at Philip's court in Macedon and in intellectual

circles in Athens; he had ample opportunity to hear what was said about recent Macedonian history. So the anecdote must have come from Archelaus' enemies. To have a courtier punished like a slave would be outrageous, the kind of behavior Greeks attributed to Asian monarchs—or to wicked tyrants. A fair amount of rough teasing, like the exchange about Sophocles' stolen cloak, was part of the social life of upperclass Greeks, and while comments on Euripides' breath would probably be outside the usual boundaries (especially since he was an old man), so would this response. It is not likely. It does, however, show actual *phthonos* against Euripides.

In his *Rhetoric* (1384b14–17), in discussing shame and how we do not like to refuse a request from people who admire us, Aristotle refers to an apparently famous anecdote:

> Such are those who just now wish to be friends (for they have seen the best qualities; for this reason Euripides' reply to the Syracusans is excellent), and those of old acquaintances who share in no knowledge of anything bad.

If the poet Euripides made a reply to the Syracusans (many scholars have thought this must be a different Euripides, but it is unlikely that Aristotle would refer to anyone except the tragedian as "Euripides" without further explanation), he probably served as an ambassador—which would be a natural role for a famous poet who was internationally highly regarded. Unfortunately, however, we cannot infer what his reply was—it must have been clever, since Aristotle assumes that his readers remember the story.

5 Popularity

Plutarch in his *Life of Nicias* describes the immense popularity of Euripides in Sicily in narrating the suffering of the Athenians captured after the failure of the Sicilian Expedition:

> Several were saved for the sake of Euripides, whose poetry, it seems, the Sicilians longed for more than any others of the Greeks outside the mainland. And when people came who could provide little examples and tastes, they happily memorized them and shared them. So then, they say that many of those who reached home gratefully greeted Euripides, and some narrated that they had been enslaved, but had been freed after teaching what they could remember of his poems, and others, wandering after the battle, been helped with food and water for singing some of his lyrics. Nor should we be astonished: they say that when a ship from Caunus that was been chased by pirates came into one of their harbors, they kept it away and did not accept it, but then when they asked if they knew songs of Euripides, and those on board said they did, they allowed them in and helped bring the ship in.
>
> (29.3–5)

At *Trojan Women* 205–29, the captive women sing about their hopes and fears about their future homes as slaves. They would most hope for Athens, and most fear Sparta; but their second choice is Thessaly, then Sicily and Magna Graecia. These last choices have nothing to do with the Homeric world; they probably reflect Euripides' awareness of his audience (Easterling (1994)). So while Plutarch's account may well be romanticized, it is based on the

reality that Euripides was very popular in Sicily—and that fact makes it very plausible that he visited on his city's business.

As for his politics, at Aristophanes' *Frogs* 951–52 Euripides defends his practice of letting all his characters express themselves as "democratic." Dionysus warns him that this is not a safe area for him. A few lines later, Euripides claims that his "students" (men influenced by his plays) are Clitophon and Theramenes. This Clitophon is probably the man known from the Platonic corpus, who in the dialogue named after him (whose authenticity is disputed) criticizes Socrates because he can exhort people to virtue but not teach them what it is or how to achieve it. In the *Republic*, Clitophon is present but says little. Clitophon is close to the sophist Thrasymachus in both dialogues and was probably no supporter of the democracy. Theramenes was an oligarch. In Aristophanes, Euripides is proud of his influence on these men. So Dionysus' comment probably implies that some Athenians saw Euripides as an associate of enemies of the democracy (this seems likelier than another possible interpretation of the passage, that it expresses resentment of his visit to Macedon). In any case, this is the only surviving political comment, and it is mild. If we are to reconstruct Euripides' political views, we can use only the plays, whose evidence is complex and equivocal.

Perhaps the single most contentious issue in the life of Euripides lies in his religious beliefs. Along with the report in Satyros that he was prosecuted for impiety, according to the biography (1A.10) both his tomb in Macedon and his cenotaph in Athens were struck by lightning. Euripides is cited in later doxographies as a thinker who did not dare make his atheism explicit (T171 Kannicht). In Aristophanes' *Women at the Thesmophoria*, a garlandseller complains that her business has drastically declined because Euripides has persuaded men that the gods do not exist (450–52). Clearly, Euripides' contemporaries did not believe that his plays taught atheism, or archons would not have given him Choruses year after year. Aristophanes' joke assumes that while his audience would agree that a certain kind of study of Euripides' plays could lead to atheism, the speculation his plays could encourage had no realworld consequences.

The biography says that he went to Magnesia and was made *proxenos* and granted an exemption from taxes. (Magnesia would have been on the way from Athens to Macedon.) A *proxenos* was a sort of honorary counsel, a citizen of one city who represented the interests and helped visitors from another city. If true—and this item is routine enough that there would be no obvious motive to invent it—the Magnesians not only respected Euripides, but regarded him as a wellrespected Athenian who would be useful to them. It appears, then, that while Euripides had no political career, he did serve both his own city and others as would be expected of a man in his position.

Another story in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* involves an *antidosis* with a man named Hygiaenon (1416a). An *antidosis* was a challenge to exchange property arising from a dispute about who was wealthier and so better able to perform an expensive public service. Hygiaenon claimed that Euripides could not be trusted to tell the truth, since he wrote the famous line (*Hipp*. 611), "my tongue swore, but my mind is not sworn." Euripides responded that his opponent was

> commiting a crime by bringing judgments from the contest of the Dionysia in the courtroom. For there he had given an account of them, or he would give one if he chose to make an accusation.

This line from *Hippolytus* was notorious and muchparodied, but its tetralogy had won first prize. Euripides probably means that if Hygiaenon made this claim as literary criticism, Euripides would refute it in a future production. If Euripides was involved in an *antidosis*, he was a very rich man (as a *proxenos* would be).

6 A Death in Macedon

About the only other real fact in his life is the visit he made near the end of his life to the court of King Archelaus of Macedon—and some scholars doubt even that, because in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, produced soon after Euripides' death, it is not mentioned that he died abroad (Scullion (2003)), or because it could have been invented to explain references to Macedonia in *Bacchae* (Lefkowitz (1981) 103). The biographical tradition makes him go to Macedonia in frustration at the mockery of the comic poets or at the envious dislike of the Athenians generally or at competitors like Morsimus, but no such reason is necessary. Angry exiles are a staple of Greek biography, and the Macedonians could propagate such stories so that they could claim Euripides as their own (Hanink (2008)). Still, nothing makes it unlikely that he went on a visit to Macedonia. Since he produced *Orestes* in 408, and died in 407/6, he was not in Macedon for long. There is no reason to think that he intended to leave Athens permanently; such an invitation would have been hard to resist when Athens was worn down by the war. Aristophanes could have ignored his having died there if nobody thought that he had not intended to return to Athens.

He composed a tragedy for Archelaus about a mythological namesake, Archelaus son of Temenus son of Aristomachus, the greatgrandson of Heracles. In this play, Archelaus saved the kingdom of Cisseus in Thrace, but the king, instead of bestowing the promised reward of his daughter's hand, set a trap whereby Archelaus would fall into a firepit. A slave told Archelaus about the plot, and he turned it against the wicked king—but had to leave Thrace and found a city in Macedonia. Part of the final choral tag of this play is quoted in the anthology of Stobaeus (Stob. 1.3.35): "For actions done not rightly have rightly come as a evil to the doers." The play is obviously flattering to Euripides' patron, though Plato describes how he allegedly gained power by murdering his uncle, cousin, and sevenyearold halfbrother (*Gorgias* 471 a–c). Euripides' play, presumably, was to be interpreted favorably to Archelaus. Euripides composed a number of plays about these descendants of Heracles, including a *Temenos* and a *Sons of Temenos*. *Crespohontes*, whose hero is a brother of Temenos, could belong to this group too. These plays, produced at Athens, probably encouraged Archelaus to invite Euripides, who also brought the tragedian Agathon to his court.

The poet who goes into exile because he is not properly appreciated is a commonplace of ancient biography, but it especially fits the biographical tradition of Euripides, plagued by envy and widespread dislike at home. The most famous story about Euripides concerns his

death. Although there are a number of variant accounts, the core is the same: Euripides is torn apart by a pack of dogs.

In the most familiar version, 1.2 (Satyros 39 col. XXI), one of Archelaus' best dogs goes astray and is sacrificed and eaten by villagers of Thracian origin. Archaelus fines them a talent (a substantial sum), and since they cannot afford it, they persuade Euripides to persuade Archelaus to remit the penalty. Later, he is in a grove when Archelaus is hunting, and Archelaus' dogs, offspring of this dog, surround and kill him. Archelaus himself was killed by his favorite while hunting, either accidentally (Diodorus Siculus 14.37.5) or deliberately (Aristotle *Politics* 1311b 8–17) in 399, and this may have influenced the story of Euripides' death.

Being torn apart by dogs was the fate of one famous character of mythology, Actaeon. Euripides did not write an *Actaeon* and so it seems relevant that Actaeon is so significant a presence in the *Bacchae*, which was one of the plays first performed only after Euripides' death and so a suitable place for him to have predicted his own fate: 230 (if genuine), 337–40, 1227, 1291. Pentheus, Actaeon's cousin, is torn to pieces by women, and dies not like Actaeon, but in the same place, on Mt Cithaeron. The story of *Bacchae* had already been treated in Aeschylus' *Pentheus*, but a reader of *Bacchae* might well think that while the characters use Actaeon as an example, Euripides is pointing to the Actaeonstory as a literary model. Euripides' death is thus a "windowallusion": it uses the story of Pentheus' death in a form that alludes to Euripides' own adaptation of Actaeon's death. The story is, whatever its peculiarities, learned and based on careful study.

Probably relevant to this tale is Euripides' interest in characters whose good qualities lead to their ruin, as Andromache complains in *Troades* 643–660 that it is the report of her wifely virtues that has led to her being given to Neoptolemus. One could also consider the more precise theme of the character destroyed by kindheartedness, as Creon suspects he will be at *Medea* 343–51. Euripides presumably intervenes on behalf of the Thracians because he is a cosmopolitan who understands that some people sacrifice dogs, and because he pities them, and this kindness leads to his death. This is a very Euripidean idea.

Yet another Euripidean theme is the capacity for vengeance of the weak. The vengeance of the next generation of dogs could almost be a parody of the oath of the children of the Seven at the end of *Suppliant Women*. The revenge of the dogs is weirdly reminiscent of *Hecuba*, which combines a surprising revenge, a Thracian connection, and the protagonist's future metamorphosis into a dog.

The oddest detail, though, is the sacrifice of the dog. Dogs as well as horses have been found in the excavation of Thracian tombs. This information is not in Herodotus. However, fr. 449, from *Cresphontes*—a fragment often cited in philosophical contexts—seems to be based on Herodotus' discussion of the birth and funeral customs of the Trausi, a Thracian tribe, in 5.4.2. The fragment claims that we should mourn at births and celebrate at funerals, as Herodotus claims the Trausi do. Satyros attributes the deathstory to the historians/storytellers (λόγιοι) and elders of the Macedonians (6.39.20). Perhaps, given the philosophical bent of his biography, Euripides' apparent interest in Thracian funeral customs led to this ethnographic

bent in the story of his death.

The variant of *Suda*, where the hunter is bribed to set the dogs on Euripides by other poets who resent Euripides' standing with Archelaus, is also worthy of some thought. *Phthonos* against Euripides is a consistent theme of the tradition. Socrates, with whom Euripides is so constantly associated in the biographical tradition, ascribes the accusations against him to *phthonos* (Plato *Apology* 18.D, 23C), but *phthonos* is a regular theme of Greek poetry; Hesiod said that "bard envies bard" (*Works and Days* 26). It was also a constant feature of Greek life, and the existence of the nasty story about Decamnichos suggests that Euripides, living or dead, was sometimes its object. In the variant of the thirdcentury BCE poet Hermesianax (fr. 7.61–68), Euripides' encounter with the dogs follows a loveaffair—but Hermesianax jokingly turns the entire history of Greek literature into a series of loveaffairs.

According to the biography, Sophocles dressed in mourning and brought his Chorus and actors to the *Proagon* without the customary garlands when he heard of Euripides' death (1A 11). (Likely to be true.) The biography (1A 10) quotes a (very good) epigram that it says was inscribed on the cenotaph in Athens and attributes to either the historian Thucydides or the lyric poet Timotheus, (whom Euripides, according to Satyros 39 XXII, helped when public response to his *Persians* was initially hostile). Under Thucydides' name, the epigram appears in the Palatine Anthology (7.45) along with other poetic epitaphs for Euripides. Pausanias in the second century CE (1.2.2) mentions seeing the cenotaph on the way from Piraeus to Athens. Whoever composed it, it is probably fourthcentury (Page (1981) 307–8). So it confirms Euripides' death in Macedon.

7 Summary

So what, in the end, do we have? A long and very successful career, and probably an unhappy marriage. The richness of his inner life and of his intellectual contacts is obvious from his poetry. The biographical tradition turns Euripides into a gloomy and alienated philosopher, and this is certainly a projection onto his life of an interpretation of one strand in his work. For modern interpreters, the biography is tricky in different ways. Interpreters used to believe too much in the biographical tradition and so were too ready to see Euripides as radical, alienated, and unlike other tragedians. However, we do not need to look for reasons to reject everything in the biographical tradition, and the reading of Euripides that generated the biography is not necessarily entirely wrong. The Amphion of *Antiope* may have had a real autobiographical element, for example; Euripides was politically inactive for a man of his prominence, and he probably did dislike "the crowd."

In the anecdote in Machon mentioned earlier, the courtesan Lais interrupts Euripides as he is working to ask him why, in a tragedy, he had written "get out, doer of shameful acts" (*Medea* 1346). The word *aischropoios*, literally "doer of shameful acts," as the scholion at Aristophanes *Clouds* 296 shows, *could* mean fellatrix. So Lais' question is directed at tragic decorum. Tragic characters can be accused of sexual immorality, but the language used and acts suggested are very constrained. She asks "Why did you use a word that could imply that

Medea is a fellatrix and is therefore a quasivulgarism?" Euripides, astounded at her nerve, because it is hardly the place of a courtesan to police tragedy for improper language, responds by asking if she is not herself an *aischropoios*. For her response, she selects the same line from the *Aeolus* that Dionysus uses against Euripides at *Frogs* 1475, "What is shameful, if it doesn't seem so to those who practice it?" (fr. 19 Kannicht). The anecdote mocks Euripides, who loses a contest of wits with a courtesan, but it also points to how central he was to Athenian culture both in his lifetime and in the following century. The work of Euripides was scrutinized with the utmost care, sometimes in unlikely quarters, and his famous lines were sometimes notorious but very widely remembered.

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FURTHER READING

Kannicht (2004) 45–145 includes the biographies and other evidence for Euripides’ life (in Greek or Latin). The biography is edited and translated into French in Méridier (1925) 1–5; the introduction, i–xi, is less skeptical of the biography than is usual now (though not credulous), as is Schmid and Stählin (1912) 346–51. Lefkowitz (1981) provides a translation of the biography in the order 1A, 2, 3,1B, with footnotes to other sources, 163–69. Her discussion of the biography is 88–104. Lefkowitz’s skepticism is extreme. Stevens (1956) argues that Euripides was not the unpopular figure of the biography; Scullion (2003) expands on Lefkowitz’s doubts about Euripides’ death in Macedon.

CHAPTER 4
Euripides and the Development of Greek Tragedy

John Gibert

1 Life in the Theater

As Scodel in this volume has shown, we lack reliable sources for an intellectual and artistic biography of Euripides. Much of the tradition is plainly derived from his work, so the attempt would only set us moving in circles. Of course this is true of other fifthcentury figures as well, including comic poets, but because Old Comedy is set in the here and now, so that it gives a picture (however distorted) of real Athenians, and because it comes with parts—above all the choral part known as the *parabasis*, which often purports to speak for the poet, or even in his voice—we can say some things we will never be able to say about tragedy. Take the case of Aristophanes' "apprenticeship." The poet was apparently quite young when he secured backers, probably fellow members of a local religious association, for his first play, and one Callistratus served as producer (*didaskalos*) for at least three of his earliest works. Moreover, several pieces of evidence strongly suggest that collaboration was an established part of comedywriting culture at this time (Halliwell (1980), (1989); Sommerstein (2009) 118–19). In contrast, claims that Euripides got help writing his tragedies from, say, his fatherinlaw or Socrates deserve no respect (Euripides T 51–4, *TrGF* V.1.74–6; the naming of Cephisophon as a collaborator in the last stage of Euripides' career may be another matter: see Sommerstein (2004)). Also, in classical Athens, tragedy and comedy ran in families. Phrynichus, Pratinas, Aeschylus, and Sophocles, among others, left sons in the tragedy business, just as sons of, for example, Aristophanes, Alexis, and Damon wrote comedies (Olson (1997) 260), and the thought of these sons' formative experiences in their fathers' shops stimulates the imagination. The pattern was well established by the time of Sophocles and Euripides, but as far as we know, neither they nor Aeschylus grew up in the trade. We fall back on generalities, such as that writing and producing tragedies clearly requires time and a superb education and therefore, presumably, comfortable circumstances and status. Beyond that, just a few observations about personal aspects of tragedy preface our study of the development it underwent at Euripides' hands—a study that must depend on the surviving plays, with almost no help from external sources of information.

The first concerns Aeschylus. When Euripides began to write, somewhere between the ages of 20 and 30, tragedy was a mature art form and had recently achieved a peak in the *Oresteia* (458 BCE). That Euripides' first production included *Daughters of Pelias* (455 BCE) inevitably invites speculation as to how Aeschylus' Clytemnestra may have influenced Euripides' first representation of Medea. In *Agamemnon*, Clytemnestra is motivated not only by a desire to avenge Iphigenia and by her adulterous relationship with Aegisthus, but by sexual jealousy of Cassandra. We know that the trilogy earned Aeschylus the first prize. The novice Euripides (who came third with his production in 455) surely took note, even though

Medea's motives were rather different in *Daughters of Pelias*, where she used magic to help Jason achieve his goals, which included the murder of his uncle Pelias. Unfortunately, the scanty fragments tell us very little. The lesson is that when we use the much later surviving plays as a basis for considering Euripides' relationship to Aeschylus, it can only be an intertextual affair. Admittedly, Aeschylus was still a presence in the theater if the Athenians allowed revivals of his plays to be entered in the competition, but that is a tradition about which we are learning to be skeptical (Biles (2006–2007), cf. Biles (2011) 60), and even if it is true, a revival is not the same as a rival.

The second observation, about Sophocles, brings us back to "life in the theater." Sophocles first competed and won in 468 BCE, 13 years before Euripides' debut, but we know of no particular early creation of his that cries out for comparison with Euripides, as Aeschylus' Clytemnestra does. Even as Sophocles and Euripides go on competing, often head to head, over the nearly 50 years from 455 to 407/6 BCE, we can rarely say that a direct comparison is inevitable. The *Electra* plays are an exception, but we do not know which came first and influenced the other. Many potentially fascinating comparisons are frustrated not only by chronological uncertainty, but by the loss of one or more of the plays in question (for example, Sophocles' *Phaedra* in relation to Euripides' *Hippolytus* plays, Sophocles' *Tereus* in relation to Euripides' *Medea*, Sophocles' *Tyro* plays in relation to Euripides' plays about abandoned sons reunited with their mothers). We know a fair bit about Euripides' lost *Philoctetes* (431 BCE), but Sophocles' late play by the same name (409 BCE) probably tells us more about the overall development of tragedy than about his "answer" to Euripides.

Nevertheless, the rivalry between Euripides and Sophocles is an irresistible topic, and here we encounter an important thesis regarding Euripides' development of tragedy. According to Ann Norris Michelini, Sophocles, who was tremendously successful right from the start of his career, succeeded with a fairly consistent style of composition that Euripides could not help but recognize as the new tragic norm, and "the apparently incongruous elements of Euripidean style acquire unity in their opposition" to this norm (Michelini (1987) 54–5). Michelini acknowledges that Sophocles was an innovator too, but one whose work gives a much greater impression of continuity with tradition. While she disavows interest in "the personal biography or psychology of either author" (55), she insists that "the problem of dealing with the Sophoklean reputation and model would become very pressing for any poet who himself wished to attain a place in the canon" (62), and her thesis is that "the multifarious nature of Euripidean drama, so frequently remarked upon, finds its best explanation in this juxtaposition with Sophokles" (65). This is not the place for a detailed examination of this challenging idea, which Michelini develops with sensitivity, learning, and a refined set of generic distinctions (borrowed from Frye (1957)). There would be much to learn from such an examination, for Michelini's argument builds on ideas that have animated Euripidean criticism from its beginnings (cf. Mastronarde (2010) 1–15). We must content ourselves, however, with pointing out a few dangers of the approach—dangers of which Michelini herself is for the most part fully aware.

The first is that the approach remains, despite all caveats, fundamentally biographical. Within the framework based on Sophocles' high and Euripides' low rate of competitive success, it

must appear either that Euripides kept trying, a little desperately, to win by using a variety of shock tactics, or that he gave up on victory and settled for the chance (which he seems to have been granted as often as he sought it) to produce plays with which he could make a mark on the genre and "attain a place in the canon." Because we know its date, we can use *Alcestis* (438 BCE) to illustrate a resulting conundrum. Euripides' production in 438 was presumably his first after he won in 441 with unknown plays. What was the winning strategy in 441? If it was "Sophoclean," Euripides was finally making his way and had every reason to continue in the same vein, and we in turn should emphasize continuities with tradition when studying *Alcestis*. But suppose the plays in 441 were "antiSophoclean." Then Euripides had learned that the Sophoclean norm was not the only way to succeed, and calling it the norm loses much of its justification. A second danger has to do with the description of Sophoclean style and its basis. Sophocles' record of success is relatively well documented, but the norm supposed to account for it can only be derived from the seven surviving plays. Apart from the unavoidable subjectivity of describing the proportion of incongruous elements in them, and the danger of oversimplifying to sharpen the contrast with Euripides, no more than one or two of the seven are likely to come from the early period on which Michelini's thesis depends, and there is reason to doubt that the pitifully small sample is representative. Our selection of Euripidean plays, meanwhile, is enriched by the chance survival of the "alphabetic" plays (see Mastronarde in this volume), which contribute greatly to our impression of his style's diversity.

Finally, concentrating on opposition to Sophocles risks failing to do justice to the other engines driving change in Euripidean tragedy. It is a truism noted already by Aristotle that Athenian tragedy matured by the middle of the fifth century and remained constant in very many ways (including in Euripides) for the rest of its history in the classical period (Hall (2007)). But it is also a truism that Sophocles and Euripides both participated in important gradual changes. One of these is the increasing prominence of actors, often linked to the establishment of a prize for best actor in 449 BCE and, more broadly, to an evolution in popular taste. Another is a tendency towards less wellknown and occasionally contrived or bizarre story lines, conditioned sometimes by a desire to present something entirely new, sometimes by a need to vary earlier dramatizations of the same material. Interacting with both of these, and doubtless also with evolving taste and expertise in the audience, is a tendency towards increasingly complex plots. Together, these account for many of the discontinuities and other features felt to be jarring in Euripides, and their influence is apparent in Sophocles as well.

In most respects, the difference between Sophocles and Euripides is best seen as a matter of degree. Thus Euripides is more open—more *obviously* open—to philosophical and sophistic ideas (for which see Dunn, Chapter 29 in this volume), but these forces at work in the larger society leave their mark on Sophoclean tragedy too. Society was perhaps experiencing heightened tension between the generations and between the sexes: Euripides' way of dramatizing such things is "in your face," but they are hardly lacking from Sophocles. Euripidean characters provide frequent "sound bites" challenging traditional belief and custom, but the overall religious import of Sophoclean tragedy is hardly less unsettling. It is simply not true that Sophocles represents a stable opposite to everything new in Euripidean

tragedy, but to say that Euripides is "more than" rather than "opposite to" Sophocles makes Michelini's explanatory model less compelling.

Before moving on, we touch very briefly on a few other aspects of Euripides' "life in the theater." One is the role he came to play in Aristophanic comedy (studied in greater detail in the next chapter), about which we ask only a couple of large questions. Did Aristophanes' use (or abuse) of Euripides, starting with *Acharnians* (425 BCE), induce Euripides to change his art in any meaningful way? Not in the sense of avoiding what Aristophanes mocks most: kings in rags, clever rhetoric, articulate women, and daring dramatic technique (for example, Bellerophon's ride to Olympus on Pegasus/the theatrical crane), because these things continue to show up in Euripides' late work. Did Euripides learn from comedy or encroach on its territory? Fifthcentury tragedy and comedy were largely distinct art forms. Over time, their differences may even have sharpened by a process of mutual differentiation (Taplin (1986), (1996)). Yet Euripides more than others is credited with incorporating "comic elements" in his tragedy (Knox (1970) = (1979) 250–74, Seidensticker (1982)). This is a large subject, but here is a brief answer. First, some of what passes for comedy in Euripides goes back to other traditions, for example the *Odyssey*. Second, not everything "comic" is typical of *Old* Comedy, the variety known to Euripides' audience. And third, Old Comedy too was constantly changing, and in some cases Aristophanes and Euripides probably both moved onto territory that was contested or unclaimed by either genre (Gibert (1999–2000); Mastronarde (2010) 44–62).

Euripides may differ from Aeschylus and Sophocles in that he did not leave a son in the business of tragedy, unless his son (or nephew), also called Euripides, had a theatrical career beyond overseeing the posthumous production that included *Bacchae* and *Iphigenia in Aulis*. But he may have had something the others lacked: a contemporary acolyte. Modern scholars tend to see the work of Agathon (first victory 416 BCE)—the very little of it that we have—as a direct outgrowth of Euripidean tragedy. There is a small crop of anecdotes about the time both poets (allegedly) spent in Macedonia at the court of Archelaus. The view of artistic dependence is reasonable, but for the personal dimension, it must be stressed that when Aristophanes has "Euripides" go looking for help from "Agathon" in *Women at the Thesmophoria* (411 BCE), he gives no indication that the two men are personally acquainted. Satyrus and Plutarch (Euripides T 87, *TrGF* V.1.88–9) also attest a personal and professional relationship between Euripides and the avantgarde poet (not tragedian) Timotheus, another guest in Macedon; it may be that in both cases the ultimate basis is not the life, but the work, and that what we have here is more evidence that Euripides was perceived as unusually open to new trends.

Finally, critics sometimes speculate that Euripides had a troubled relationship with the majority of the Athenian audience and/or a devoted following among a minority. The first possibility, along with his possible departure for Macedon near the end of his life, fuels further speculation that in his latest tragedies, Euripides looks beyond Athens to Macedonian and/or other venues. Evidence for any of this is hard to find, and it is more likely that the declining Athenocentrism of the later work reflects a trend already long in evidence, having more to do with the growing international prestige of tragedy than with Euripides' individual success or lack of it.

2 Women Bad and Good

In *Medea* (431 BCE), Euripides created one of his most memorable characters. We have already noted that the same mythical figure, though at a different stage of her story, appeared in his first production (*Daughters of Pelias*, 455 BCE). Euripides seems in fact to have made "bad women" something of a specialty in the first half of his career. (Mueller in this volume takes up the question of gender and scholarly discourse on "bad women" in Euripides.) T.B.L. Webster collects nine plays under this heading and distributes one to each of the nine productions he assigns to the years 455–428 (Webster (1967) 31–2, 77–86). The truth may not be quite so tidy, but it is clear that Euripides' variations on the "Potiphar's wife" story pattern (in which a married woman tries to seduce a younger man, fails, and then accuses him of rape) —all six of them—belong more or less to this period. Webster's other three plays (*Daughters of Pelias*, *Aegeus*, *Medea*) involve Medea, to whom no one will deny the label "bad," though her motives may not always include sexual passion. Here we can only touch upon Euripides' preoccupation throughout his career with gender themes, a preoccupation whose meanings are inexhaustible and which is shared to some extent with all of classical Greek drama and evident, in various forms, throughout the society. It is worth just mentioning the possibility that, first, the growth of Athenian democracy was accompanied by increased effort on the part of male citizens to regulate the lives of women (and no doubt in some cases a psychological need to dominate them) and, second, that against this background Pericles' Citizenship Law (451/50 BCE) and, later, conditions during the long Peloponnesian War (431–404 BCE) drew attention to Athenian women's contributions to society and caused some of them to be, or be perceived to be, more assertive. These developments (sketched here with a very broad brush) belong precisely to the early phase of Euripides' career and help to explain, if explanation is needed, the resonance "bad women" may have had in the theater. In any case, it appears to most modern readers that Euripides' angles on the battle of the sexes are many and varied, a good example of tragedy's development in response to both external factors and inner imperatives—to explore, vary, and surprise. All of which would hardly need saying, except that Aristophanes tries to make it seem that Euripides' "bad women" represent a single deviation from a norm—in this case an allegedly Aeschylean norm. Never mind that Aristophanes does this in 411 and 405 (in *Women at the Thesmophoria* and *Frogs*, respectively), long after Webster's series of "bad women" ends, at a time when Euripides' most innovative women in fact look rather different. The comic proposition was never worth taking seriously.

Let us turn, then, to the two earliest surviving plays of Euripides and try to say something serious, if necessarily brief, about their traditional and untraditional elements, including the role of gender. In *Alcestis* (438), Admetus is, in the eyes of many, a hero who fails to measure up to a heroic standard of behavior. A debunking stance towards his protagonists and heroic saga in general is often seen as a more or less constant feature of Euripidean tragedy distinguishing it from a norm represented in this case by both Aeschylus *and* Sophocles. This approach to Admetus remains controversial (see Visvardi in this volume), but without investing too much in evaluating his character, we can say that it does seem typical of Euripides to find ways to draw uncomfortable implications out of traditional stories. Given a story in which a wife dies in place of her husband, how would she feel and act? How about the

husband? How would others see him? To keep it edgy, Euripides makes sure the play does not clearly answer every question we might think to ask about antecedents to the plot. (Did Alcestis volunteer, or was she asked? If she volunteered, could Admetus have refused?) In giving the "fairy tale" a dramatic shape, Euripides stages an ugly, bitter quarrel between Admetus and his father Pheres, who is not required by the tale type to be anything but a foil for Alcestis. He also brings Admetus' prized, defining virtue of hospitality to the fore in a way that makes it possible to see it as an indulgence or excess. (Should Admetus invite Heracles under his roof? Does he violate the vows he makes to the dying Alcestis? Should he accept the veiled woman Heracles brings to him?) While many tragedies end with a funeral, *Alcestis* has one in its middle—and then ends with what is in effect a wedding. But Euripides deprives the ceremony of some of its celebratory effect by improvising a mythicoreligious reason for an eloquent surprise: Alcestis must remain silent. Her silence is what convinces many critics that Euripides has something to say about the conventions of female excellence apparently exemplified by Alcestis—a "good woman" if ever there was one—and discussed by her and others earlier in the play.

The "wedding" and displaced funeral in *Alcestis* lead to another aspect of Euripides' relation to his tradition, namely his manipulation of generic expectations. There is no doubt that a straitjacketed view of "the tragic" has often had a detrimental effect on criticism of Greek (not just Euripidean) tragedy (Mastronarde (1999–2000), (2010)). Yet experimentation with novel combinations of traditional effects does seem to characterize many of the surviving plays. In the case of *Alcestis*, the point of departure is the ancient preface (*hypothesis*), which tells us that this tragedy, unlike any other that we know of, came fourth in its production, that is, in place of a satyr play. It is easy to list features that might be felt as "satyric": the ogrelike figure of Death wrestled into submission by the quintessential satyrplay hero Heracles; the drinking, feasting, and singing of that same Heracles; the plot centered on a helpless female's rescue and the restoration of a marriage; and perhaps the play's unusual brevity. As usual, counterarguments and alternative views are available, but the unique circumstance that a tragedy has been offered in place of a satyr play remains, and remains suggestive.

Of the many ways in which the second surviving play, *Medea* (431 BCE), exemplifies the development of tragedy by Euripides, I comment on just two. Medea is a strong, proud, irascible, inflexible protagonist who dominates the play nearly from start to finish. She is, in a word, a "Sophoclean" hero (Knox (1977); cf. Knox (1964)). Her departures from type could be considered so few as to be almost insignificant, or at any rate smoothly continuous with tradition: one might say that here, as in no other play except perhaps *Hippolytus*, Euripides held close to the tragic "norm." Yet innovations and surprises are hardly lacking. Medea's sex is not one of them. Sophocles has his Antigone, Aeschylus his Clytemnestra; in any case, Euripides makes it hard to tell how much it matters that Medea is a woman, since she is also a semidivine, foreign sorceress. Nor is it the shocking nature of Medea's crime: what the audience had probably seen in Procne not long before in Sophocles' *Tereus* is even worse. As far as we can tell, two things above all set *Medea* apart. The first is that the familiar scene in which a weaker character tries in vain to hold the Sophoclean hero back from the action that seals his or her fate is replaced here by Medea's monologue (1021–80): she is the only

character strong enough to offer meaningful resistance to her plan, and she becomes internally divided in a fascinating way that had probably not been seen before, and in which, as in so much else in the play, gender dynamics do play an important part (Foley (1989)). Secondly, Medea makes her final appearance on the *mechane*. Instead of being forced, like many Sophoclean heroes, to conclude that the gods have forsaken her, she occupies the theatrical space usually reserved for them and escapes in a chariot provided by her grandfather Helios, the sungod. This theatrical masterstroke is as stunning a statement about divinity as any Euripides makes through the words of rationalizing or atheistic characters.

Another novel and perhaps typically Euripidean aspect of *Medea* is connected with its historical moment. The original production took place just months before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, which was already clearly on the horizon. Corinth belonged to the Spartan sphere of influence and was especially hostile to Athens. Euripides' play is set in Corinth, yet its version of the Medea myth, possibly invented by Euripides, is favorable to Corinthians (insofar as they do not kill Medea's children, as in some other versions) and not flattering to Athenians (insofar as their king Aegeus appears a little slowwitted and is maneuvered into offering safe haven to a childmurderer, a point the third stasimon (824–65) makes impossible to miss). Is Euripides trying to get under the skin of Athenian spectators? Did his choice influence the judges' decision to rank the production that included *Medea* last? The questions are unanswerable, but many do feel that a more or less provocative stance towards Athens is evident in Euripides more often than in Aeschylus or Sophocles. The conclusion comes with paradoxes: Euripides' work also includes the most overtly patriotic of surviving tragedies, *Children of Heracles*, *Suppliant Women*, and the lost *Erechtheus* (though not everyone trusts their sincerity). Also, after his death Euripides quickly became the most popular tragedian, so it is possible to make him out as the prototype of the artist who is not entirely alienated from his public, but just a little ahead of his time.

3 Language and Composition

If the preceding sections have given a sense of the complexities and uncertainties involved in any attempt to situate Euripides within his tradition, it will be readily appreciated that the present one, which sketches some characteristics of his style, represents the merest starting point for further study; some of its topics are covered more fully in individual chapters later in this volume. Careful attention to tragic idiom over the centuries has yielded substantial but often dauntingly technical results. More recently, intensive study of dramatic form and of the various contexts of tragic art (historical, social, philosophical, religious) has also produced bountiful insights. By way of preface, it is worth repeating that there are many basic features common to all the tragedy that has come down to us that make it quite unlike any of the other achievements of Greek literature and culture. Whether Euripides' innovations appear large or small depends to a great degree on the angle of observation. Also, we should not forget that he like other poets remained essentially unpredictable, able to surprise and delight his audience at any moment with anything from a phrase to a song to a stage action to the artistic vision shaping an entire production.

To begin with language, and with dialogue, Euripides is rightly held to have prized clarity of expression. He is in general less willfully enigmatic than Aeschylus and less syntactically adventurous than Sophocles. He is willing, perhaps increasingly over time, to use colloquial language, but we should not conclude from Aristophanes (*Frogs* 959–67) that his sole purpose in doing so was to make tragedy more familiar and accessible; instead, he aims at a great variety of aesthetic and tonal effects (Stevens (1976); Collard (2005)). Also, his idiom remains fundamentally distant from ordinary speech: the proportion of colloquialism remains low, he introduces new words and extends the meanings of existing words constantly, and his arrangement of them is always artful, Greek dramatic dialogue being invariably presented in verse form. Within that form (mainly the iambic trimeter, with occasional passages in trochaic tetrameters from about 415 BCE on), there is gradually increasing freedom, specifically in the kinds and overall rate of "resolution" (the occurrence of two short syllables in places where the basic metrical pattern calls for one long syllable or one syllable that may be either long or short) (Cropp and Fick (1985)). This freedom, which eventually far exceeds that found in Aeschylus and Sophocles, is probably another move towards colloquialism, as well as towards the metrical technique of comedy. Wellrounded maxims endeared Euripides to anthologists, just as wellreasoned arguments earned him a lasting place in an educational system strongly inclined towards rhetoric. Long expository prologues, a feature not shared with Sophocles, are subjected to devastating parody in Aristophanes' *Frogs* (1177–1247), where at least their beginnings are shown to be rhythmically and syntactically repetitive; nevertheless, sympathetic reading reveals that they also preview important themes and set the initial tone of their respective plays.

Much of what enlivened tragic lyric and made it entertaining, instructive, moving, and memorable is lost to us, in particular most aspects of the music and the interactions with extradramatic songs of many kinds (literary, popular, festive, cultic). The language of lyric typically uses a wide range of poetic resources in condensed, expanded, and elevated forms. According to one thorough and influential study, Euripidean lyric is less original and successful than Aeschylean or Sophoclean in its use of imagery, personification, metonymy, and metaphor, but aims more consistently for "high style" through such purely linguistic means as new words (especially compounds), fulsomeness, brachylogy, periphrasis, inconcinnity, transferred epithet and other types of artificial word order, repetition, antithesis, oxymoron, and ornamental epithets (Breitenbach (1934)). There is much truth here, though the aesthetic evaluation is colored both by Aristophanes' caricatures (e.g. *Women at the Thesmophoria* 1015–55, *Frogs* 1309–63) and by nineteenthcentury romanticism. Euripidean lyric is, if not daring in its imagery, often vividly pictorial, and it features many striking juxtapositions. Formally, Euripides innovates by giving more solo songs (no longer shared with the Chorus) to actors, especially those playing female roles. These are often highly emotional, as is a type of lyric scene he favors in which a character receives news and reacts to it, often in the dochmiac rhythm that is virtually confined to tragedy. Related to these are duets following scenes of recognition, in which the usual pattern is that a female sings while her male counterpart responds with spoken delivery. In scenes of both types, the composition is often astrophic, in contrast to the more usual earlier pattern of arrangement in pairs of matching stanzas, or strophic pairs followed by an epode. It should be noted that on our evidence Sophocles is

somewhat more willing than Euripides to give singing roles to men. There are a dozen or so choral songs in Euripides devoted mainly to mythical narrative and more loosely connected to their surrounding plots than is usual in Aeschylus and Sophocles. Rather than label these "dithyrambic" (Kranz (1933) 228–66), foregrounding an unprovable connection with a mostly lost genre), we do better to see in them (as in other, especially later, Euripidean lyrics) the influence of the "new music" (see D'Angour in this volume). Rhythmically, Euripides is prone to long aeolic sequences (glyconic and related cola) sometimes disparaged as uninventive, but in general he and Sophocles share a similar range of techniques. Most of both poets' songs have fewer stanzas than those of Aeschylus, and both use combinations of heterogeneous rhythms (polymetry) increasingly in their later works.

The dramatic role of the Chorus shows some differences from both Aeschylus and Sophocles. Compared to Aeschylus, both Sophocles and Euripides gradually reduce the number, length, and complexity of choral songs, and as plots become more complex and suspenseful, the Chorus sometimes fades to insignificance and/or loses consistency and distinctiveness as a character towards the ends of plays. Compared to Sophocles, Euripides is somewhat more likely to choose a Chorus that matches a protagonist's age and sex (if not also status), especially sympathetic female Choruses in plays with suffering females (see also Murnaghan in this volume). Euripides' expository monologues, particularly those spoken by divinities, often put the Chorus in the position of having less knowledge than the spectators; some of the authority Choruses were traditionally capable of representing is thereby traded for effects such as irony and misunderstanding. Aristotle famously, though rather offhandedly, compares Euripides' use of the Chorus unfavorably to Sophocles', saying that "the Chorus ought to be taken as one of the actors and be part of the whole and join in the action/contest/struggle (*synagonizesthai*) not as in Euripides, but as in Sophocles" (*Poetics* 18.1456a25–7). If Aristotle means by *synagonizesthai* that the Chorus should join in the protagonist's suffering, his judgment is not necessarily invalidated by the observation we just made about female Choruses and suffering female characters, for there is another technique common in Aeschylus and Sophocles, the use of choral odes to maintain or enhance an intense focus on the action (called "forward tension" by Mastronarde), which is not favored by Euripides. If Aristotle means that Euripidean Choruses are more distanced from the plot in general, his view finds support in the number of Euripidean choral odes connected with the preceding action either indirectly or not at all, in the late point at which odes that do have a connection with the action make that connection explicit, and in Euripidean Choruses' tendency to begin by apostrophizing remote entities. (On all these points see Mastronarde (1998) and (2010) 88–152, to which this paragraph is heavily indebted.)

The form taken by individual scenes is broadly similar to what is found in Aeschylus and Sophocles (expository prologues, as mentioned, being an exception), but an important feature of Euripidean style is his willingness to draw attention to typical scenes as such, a tendency sometimes labeled "formalism." This happens in at least three ways, which can occur together. First, characters sometimes use words or phrases that hint at scenic forms or could even be used as labels for them (e.g. *agōn logon* during a contest scene). Second, the boundaries of traditional forms are often marked with unabashed clarity by bland choral tags or the

announcement of an entrance or exit. Third, Euripides sometimes lets traditional forms run to extraordinary length. For example, he has passages of stichomythia (in which characters take turns speaking exactly one line at a time) lasting well over 100 lines (Collard (1980) = (2007) 16–30). It may be that audiences also came to see certain oftrepeated scenarios, like recognition and intrigue, as instances of new theatrical forms, and Euripidean specialties. The difficulty of gauging the effects of formalism in this sense may be seen from the example of divine epiphanies. Some of these are obviously contrived, and they send an unmistakable signal that the end of the play is near. Yet scholars often argue convincingly that the effect is precisely "anticlosural" (see especially Dunn (1996)).

The chapters that follow repeatedly show that in terms of mythical content and plot construction, Euripides is enormously inventive, as was expected of any Greek poet. To attempt a broad characterization is risky, but one may note his blending of fifthcentury and heroic perspectives in such a way that his protagonists often seem to struggle to fulfill their mythical roles; surprising, if not always entirely unprecedented, twists on familiar themes and characters (chaste Helen, sympathetic Polynices); and the representation of new points of view, especially those of women and young people, within the framework of traditional stories. The latter tendency does not extend very far to other marginalized groups (slaves, the lower classes, foreigners), but the sporadic exceptions encourage some to see Euripides as progressive and egalitarian, while others, with no less justification, find the perspective of the plays taken as a whole reliably elitist. Choosing between such alternatives requires adopting a point of view, but Euripidean drama powerfully articulates a multiplicity of points of view, a politically significant fact in itself (Hall (1997) 118–26).

This last point brings us to ideas and tone, which are even harder to summarize, even though in regard to them Euripides can easily appear quite different from Aeschylus and Sophocles. Certainly his characters offer more undisguised talk of philosophy (in which cosmology, epistemology, and ontology predominate) and engage in more overt religious skepticism and criticism than their Aeschylean and Sophoclean counterparts (see the chapters by Fletcher and Dunn in this volume). They often speak in ways influenced by the rhetoric of Assembly and courtroom. They comment on social institutions and topics such as war and peace, tyranny and democracy, and marriage and parenthood, and they have visions of utopian alternatives. Cumulatively, and in combination with certain stylistic mannerisms (especially sententiousness), these features give the texture of Euripidean tragedy its distinctive feel; individually, the departures from tradition are often small, and they do not keep Euripides from engaging on a deeper level with a range of issues largely shared with Aeschylus and Sophocles. Even Aristotle concedes that Euripides is "the most tragic of poets," that is, that he excels at exciting pity, terror, and astonishment (*Poetics* 13.1453a28–30).

As tragedy involves human conflict, struggle, and limitations in a world of chaos and destruction overseen by seemingly cruel or capricious gods, the question arises to what extent individual characterization matters, and how Euripides develops this dimension of the genre. He seems to many to have a greater interest in psychological depth and to flesh out his characters with contemporary, "subheroic" touches, but at the same time to fall short of convincing or realistic portrayal fairly often. There is some truth in these generalizations, but

one must remember to situate them in the context of the effects Greek tragedians sought in particular scenes and whole plays. Characterization is likely to be driven by interaction with images, themes, arguments, formal structures, and plot developments as much as by extra dramatic observation of human nature. Nevertheless, Euripides is less interested than Sophocles in sustaining aloofness, selfsufficiency, or grandeur in individual characters, and this may be what Sophocles meant by the remark attributed to him by Aristotle (*Poetics* 25.1460b33–4), that "he himself represented people as they should be, Euripides as they are" (Mastronarde (2010) 304–6). Similar considerations apply to Euripides' use of "comic elements." These include lighter touches of language and characterization and structural features, such as happy endings and some of the scenes that turn on mistaken identity. Although these belong to very old storytelling traditions, Aeschylus and especially Sophocles use them sparingly. In Euripides, they stir a range of emotions and combinations of emotions, and they touch on issues that, as far as we can see, were not always on the agenda of other tragedians; to judge them inimical to properly "tragic" effects, however, is to adopt too narrow a view of tragedy.

4 Coming to the End

Euripides' latest surviving plays (*Phoenician Women*, *Orestes*, *Bacchae*, and *Iphigenia at Aulis*) are sometimes read in ways that emphasize the poet's selfconscious awareness of his tradition and a sense that it is beginning to turn back on itself in new ways as it nears an end or crisis. Undeniably, the context for such a notion is again provided by biography, the earliest reception of Euripides in Aristophanes, and the hazards of transmission. That is, *we* know exactly when Euripides was nearing the end of his life and career; *Frogs* (produced soon after his death), in which Dionysus says there are no good tragic poets left in Athens (72), solidifies the sense that the heyday of tragedy passed with the deaths of Sophocles and Euripides; and the loss of fourthcentury tragedy (except, probably, *Rhesus*) makes it difficult to argue otherwise. Some characteristics of the works in question, however, also encourage this kind of interpretation.

In *Phoenician Women* (411–409 BCE), an impression of lateness results in part from the large cast and open structure. While these features have precedents, they contrast with the more concentrated form taken by many of the bestknown and most influential tragedies. The proliferation of characters, themes, and events has an almost anthological feel, reinforced both by the cycle of choral songs that locates them in a broader mythological context and by persistent evocations of earlier literary works, especially Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes* and Sophocles' *Antigone* and *Oedipus Tyrannus*. Literary reminiscence assumes even greater prominence in *Orestes* (408 BCE), which Froma Zeitlin in a celebrated essay describes as a "palimpsestic" text (Zeitlin (1980) 54 = (2003) 314), aware at every turn that its characters and actions double, mirror, and distort those of earlier works, including the *Odyssey*, the lyric poetry of Stesichorus, and above all Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, which had already served as the touchstone of such Euripidean efforts as *Electra* and *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, though in a less pervasive way (Torrance (2013) 13–62). Moreover, Euripides creates a temporal space

for his play—the sixth day after Orestes has killed his mother Clytemnestra, before his traditional wanderings in search of purification—that seems to proclaim its own fictionality. The return of Menelaus and Helen on just this day, the timely arrival of Pylades, and the invention of an Argive trial to determine the fate of Orestes and his sister all wear the unembarrassed look of plot contrivances rather than "myth," and they set up the even more outrageous plots to kidnap Hermione and murder Helen. These plots, like everything Orestes attempts, fail (Burnett (1971) 195), but he is on the point of exiting the scene in a blaze of glory when he is stopped by the epiphany of Apollo, whose intervention and dispensations strike most critics as more arbitrary than those of other gods from the machine. The length to which *Orestes* takes various stylistic developments contributes to an overall effect some go so far as to call selfparody.

On the level of plot, the relationship of *Iphigenia at Aulis* to its literary predecessors is a little different. If we take Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (104–257) as the basis of comparison, we will say that Euripides makes a whole play out of events merely reported in a choral song (albeit a powerful and memorable one). This is not a surprising way for a tragic poet to develop traditional material, and Euripides and his public had additional frames of reference, for the story of Iphigenia's sacrifice was told in the epic *Cypria* and may have furnished the plots of plays called *Iphigenia* by Aeschylus and Sophocles. What looks selfconscious in Euripides' version is, for example, the business with Agamemnon's letter in the prologue, where the act of writing and rewriting calls attention to the authorial hand and introduces a leitmotif of seemingly arbitrary change of mind (Foley (1985) 65–105, Gibert (1995) 202–54, Torrance (2013) 158–65). In its treatment of the crisis within Agamemnon's family, a traditional theme, the play goes far towards creating a kind of private atmosphere and bourgeois morality; at the same time, its political dimension continues the trend away from Athenocentrism towards a vision of "Panhellenic masses." These tendencies are prophetic, in that both come to the fore in fourthcentury genres other than tragedy (Michelini (1999–2000)). Finally, *Bacchae* presents a traditional and uncomplicated plot of divine punishment. Like the matter, the form is archaizing, for example in the small amount of actor's song and the low rate of resolution in the iambic trimeter. Archaism, an obvious kind of retrospection, typically involves sophisticated play with literary convention, and so it is with *Bacchae*. Euripides takes advantage of Dionysus' dominating presence to play more—and more openly, cleverly, and pervasively—than he usually does with theatrical conventions, including masks, costumes, entrances and exits, staging, and plot management (Foley (1980) = (2003), Segal (1997)).

To be sure, "straight" readings of these plays are not only possible, but rich and rewarding, and we must be careful not to exaggerate their selfconsciousness and "metatheatricality," or fail to recognize that some degree of such play always characterized the tragic genre. Individually, the developments arise naturally from what has gone before and reflect the gradual expansion of tragic possibilities. Euripides is not the only poet to participate in this expansion: the latest plays of Sophocles, *Philoctetes* and *Oedipus at Colonus*, display features that can be described in similar ways (cf. Hall (2007) 274: "*Philoctetes* is arguably the most avantgarde ancient tragedy, intellectually if not theatrically"). If we could read more of the (vast) output of fourthcentury tragedians, we could give a more satisfying account of the

further developments introduced in a genre that the Athenians themselves, *pace* Aristophanes, hardly perceived as exhausted (Easterling (1993)). Taken together, however, the latest plays of Euripides reveal a poet manipulating his tradition in ways comparative study shows to be typical of genres nearing a critical point in their historical development. This is not a process that ever truly reaches an end; rather, "like the mytheme of creation by the dismemberment of a primordial being, from Euripides' dismemberment of tragic integrity arises a proliferation of potential new forms" (Zeitlin (1980) 72 = (2003) 341). The accidents of survival allow us to study some of these new forms in New Comedy and other genres that show tragic influence, but unfortunately not in tragedy itself.

5 Conclusion

The study of Euripides' development of the tragic genre is bedeviled by gaps in the evidence (above all the loss of the vast majority of plays performed before, during, and after his career), old prejudices that die hard (Aristophanes' vision of his assault on tragic dignity, developed in an influential strand of modern criticism; Aristotle's preference for closed form and concentration on the sufferings of a "heroic" individual, adopted in another strand), and the inherent difficulties of grasping an art form from which we are separated by formidable barriers of time, language, and material and social circumstance. The present essay has tried to maintain two perspectives: one within which Euripides mostly appears to continue established practices, gradually introducing carefully chosen innovations as any Greek poet was expected to do; and another within which his innovations cumulatively convey a distinctive artistic personality and a range of possible meanings that had never been seen before. Euripides is master of the slight added twist with farreaching consequences. For example, when Electra cries out "Apollo has sacrificed us" at *Orestes* 191, her variation of a wellestablished tragic metaphor to convey deep despair is readily intelligible, yet the way in which her words alter the relationship between gods and mortals in one of the most important Greek religious rituals is unique, imaginative, and dramatically significant (Gibert (2003)). I conclude by simply listing a few other items that similarly strike me as unique combinations of old and new: Hippolytus saying "It was my tongue that swore, my mind remains unsworn" (*Hippolytus*); Ion's joy in his Delphic paradise juxtaposed with Creusa's misery as she dwells on her rape and abandonment and the exposure of her infant (*Ion*); Bellerophon driven by melancholy to fly to Olympus and confront Zeus (*Bellerophon*); Medea appearing above the *skene* on the chariot of the Sun (*Medea*); the letter that ushers in the recognition of Orestes and Iphigenia (*Iphigenia among the Taurians*); Orestes telling Tyndareus to condemn and execute Apollo for demanding the murder of Clytemnestra (*Orestes*); Electra faulting the old family retainer's trust in the Aeschylean tokens of Orestes' return (*Electra*); Evadne's death leap (*Suppliant Women*); Perseus swooping down on winged sandals to rescue Andromeda (*Andromeda*); Dionysus uttering the syllable "Ah!" and taking control of Pentheus' mind (*Bacchae*). As readers will enjoy discovering for themselves, there are many more such moments in Euripidean tragedy.

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FURTHER READING

Mastronarde (2010) is a perceptive, wideranging study that is both accessible and scholarly; there is no better starting point for the topics covered in this chapter, which has been greatly influenced by it. Rutherford (2012) appeared after this chapter was written; readers will find in it a wealth of astute observation and comparisons on the Greek tragic tradition and its three major poets. Michelini (1987) should be consulted for the full version of the thesis critiqued in the text, for its survey of Euripidean scholarship, and for subtle readings of four plays (*Hecuba*, *Electra*, *Heracles*, and *Hippolytus*). For continuity and change in tragedy from 430 to 380 BCE, see Hall (2007). Good introductions to Euripides include Gregory (2005) and Hall ((2010) 231–98). General books on Euripides all discuss at least some of the topics covered here; see especially Conacher (1967) and Burnett (1971). On Euripides' language and style, readers with some Greek should consult Mastronarde ((2002) 81–96); those with German as well, Schmid ((1940) 790–812) and, for lyric, Breitenbach (1934). Studies devoted to particular scenic forms include Strohm (1957), Schwinge (1968), Jens (1971), Collard (1975) = (2003), Collard (1980) = (2007), Erbse (1984), de Jong (1991), Lloyd (1992), Battezzato (1995), Dunn (1995), Dubischar (2001), and Barrett (2002). Essay collections with good treatments of topics discussed here include Cropp, Lee, and Sansone (1999–2000) and Mossman (2003).

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PART II
Early Plays (438–416 BCE)

CHAPTER 5
Alcestis

Eirene Visvardi

Produced in 438 BCE as the fourth play in its tetralogy, the *Alcestis* is our earliest extant play by Euripides. Phrynichus had earlier presented his own *Alcestis*, possibly a satyr play, but we know very little about it (*TrGF*, V.1, Frgs.1c–3; Dale (1954) xii–xiv). Euripides' version, our only surviving dramatization of Alcestis' selfsacrifice and return to life, has raised a number of fascinating questions regarding Euripidean morality and poetics as well as the very notion of tragedy.

In this version, Apollo informs us in the prologue that the day has come for Alcestis' death, since she alone has offered to die in place of her husband Admetus. Death himself arrives to claim her life but Apollo intervenes and announces that a guestfriend will rescue Alcestis. Unaware of this prospect, Alcestis prepares for and soon encounters death in public, a unique example of onstage death in Greek tragedy. During what she believes to be her last interaction with her husband and taking pride in being the best wife, she asks him to reciprocate her sacrifice by doing what is best for the family: not remarry. Admetus promises much more: a solitary life of perpetual mourning with a statue of his wife as his only comfort, a cold pleasure in his empty bed. When Heracles arrives, however, Admetus practically dismisses his grief and insists on entertaining him. Convinced to stay, Heracles eats and drinks in abandon, singing raucous songs in the lamenting home. In the meantime, Admetus treats another *philos* quite differently. During an argument with Pheres, he vehemently blames his father for not dying on his behalf. Pheres fights back, accusing his son of shameless cowardice and even of "murdering" Alcestis. Upon returning from his wife's burial Admetus seems to have internalized his father's accusations and to experience the "tragic" realization that his life without Alcestis is a living death. But not for long. Having discovered Admetus to be an exceptional host despite his grief, Heracles wrests Alcestis from Death and the play moves from the sounds of lamentation to a final scene of symbolic (re)marriage, perplexing for its humor. Heracles arrives with a veiled woman, purportedly his prize at an athletic contest, to insist that Admetus receive her in his home. After some resistance, Admetus eventually capitulates: he accepts this woman who so resembles Alcestis that he can neither withhold his tears nor hide his admiration for her beautiful body. As soon as Heracles reveals her true identity, the couple departs into their home to start a new life together. But while Admetus proclaims himself a fortunate man and orders celebrations, the formerly forthright Alcestis follows him in ritual silence.

Everything about the *Alcestis*—its plot, characters, rhetoric, and position as a fourthplace play—has led to interpretations that diverge significantly. In the first three sections of this chapter I discuss influential approaches to the play that can be organized according to a focus on: tone and genre; structure, characterization, and major themes; and gender. In section 4, I turn to a lessoften examined aspect: pity and desire as emotions central to the play's action

and potential effect. Despite this thematic organization, it will become apparent that the above issues remain closely interrelated, with the question of genre and of the ending's tone usually determining their overall import and effect.

1 The *Alcestis* and Genre

Critics continue to debate what constitutes tragedy as a genre and whether genre itself is a useful interpretive category. In the case of tragedy in the fifth century, generic specifications and expectations are or should be treated with particular caution, given that the genre itself is evolving, with affinities to other genres and diverse registers such as the comic or humorous giving it scope and dynamism in its dialogue with the Greek poetic tradition and its position within Athenian performance culture (see also Mastronarde (2010) 62). Euripides would then be seen not as "abandoning or corrupting a fixed genre, but exploring the potentialities of a living genre" (*ibid.*, 54). Nonetheless literary criticism since antiquity has often addressed Euripides' role in shaping or destroying "tragedy" and the tragic. The position of the *Alcestis* in the place of the traditional satyr play, its plot and happy ending, and the range of motley characters make this play central to discussions about Euripidean manipulations of genre.

According to the play's ancient introduction (*hypothesis*) attributed to Aristophanes of Byzantium, the *Alcestis* was staged fourth after *Cretan Women, Alcmaeon in Psophis,* and *Telephus* and "has a change of fortune that is rather of the comic kind." The play, a later addition continues, is "rather of the satyric kind, because it turns to joy and pleasure, contrary to the tragic kind." Plot elements were thus thought to define the tone of the play in opposition to tragedy. Attempts to define the tone and genre of the *Alcestis* continue to figure prominently in discussions of the play. The identities scholars have assigned to the *Alcestis*—often grouping it with *Helen*, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, *Ion*, and *Orestes*—range from tragicomedy (or the closely related romantic tragedy and melodrama), prosatyric play, tragedy, or an experimental play. A survey of these categorizations reveals the unique character—and challenges—of the *Alcestis*.

Citing elements appropriated from folktale, several scholars have viewed the *Alcestis* as a tragicomedy that evokes mixed thoughts and emotions (Kitto ([1939]/2002) 311–329, Barnes (1964) 128–130, Arrowsmith ([1974]/1989) 3–4 and 28, Seidensticker (1982) 129–153; on the folktale tradition, see WilamowitzMoellendorff (1886) 67–77, Lesky (1925), Conacher (1988) 30–35, Parker (2007) xi–xv). Though Alcestis is seen as a tragic heroine and the play's issues as appropriate to tragedy, it is a sort of magic that brings about the solution to these issues and thus cancels out all tragic dilemma. This combination results in an ambivalent emotional and intellectual response which lies at the heart of the tragicomic treatment (Barnes (1964) 129). Put differently, the presentation of a fictive situation and our certainty about the happy outcome makes our (serious) emotional response—our being moved by Alcestis' death—last only temporarily. For this reason, we are looking at a combination of the pathetic (not the "tragic"), the amusing, and the melodramatic which creates elegance but allows for no intellectual or moral profundity (Kitto ([1939]/2002) 315–316).

The same elements have led other scholars to focus on incongruities that, they suggest, define the play's unique tone. Rosenmeyer ((1963) 213–216), for instance, argues that the *Alcestis* is not a tragedy because it deals with death as a natural necessity. Even though it comes as close to realism as Greek drama can be, its allusions to folktale infuse it with optimism and the light tone of a *commedia* or a genial fairy tale. From a different point of view, though the play treats sufferings and themes typical of serious tragedy, it brings together two distinct sources of material: Olympian mythology (the myth of Apollo's enslavement to Admetus) and folktale tradition (the story of Alcestis' death for her husband). The disjunction between the two contributes to both the play's unique tone and "the uncanny effect of a neartragedy, suspended in, and finally dispelled by, a faintly mocking fairy tale" (Conacher (1967) 327–339). Clearly then, ideas about the integration of folktale and mythic material define perceptions of the play's unusual tone. Its "lighter" tone occasions comparisons to a fairy tale or a peculiar type of comedy—a comedy, that is, not in ancient terms. Although this tone does not eliminate the play's tragic aspects, it is seen as creating a worldview that is not (simply or primarily) that of tragedy.

A number of readers, however, insist that the *Alcestis* can only be a tragedy. The leading characters are drawn from myth, the Chorus' function in directing our sympathies is familiar from tragedy, and humor is present but not coarse as in comedy or satyr play (Parker (2007) xix–xxiv). The play, suggest these critics, contrasts a range of themes and emotional registers only to foreground its tragic tone. Satyric themes (see below) and folktale elements are adapted for tragic treatment (Dale (1954) xxi). The restoration of social order to its "normal" condition, a feature typical of comedy, may be evoked in the happy ending but the mood remains somber and keeps us in the realm of tragedy (Segal (1992b) 25–26). A number of epic and epinician echoes, moreover, further contribute to the play's special tone which renders it a peculiar tragedy but a tragedy nevertheless (Garner (1988)).

The generic category, however, that the *Alcestis* occupies rather prominently is that of the prosatyric play. The term "prosatyric" is a modern coinage meant precisely to accommodate the tone of the *Alcestis* as stemming primarily from its position following the conventional tragic trilogy. Scholars identify satyric elements in the *Alcestis* and ask whether the play performs the function of satyr play (Seaford (1984) 24–25, Chourmouziades (1986) 76–110, Thorburn (2002) xviii–xxx). These elements include scenes such as Heracles' banquet and the defeat of Death; themes such as hospitality and its abuse, trickery, loyalty and betrayal within the family; folktale elements; role inversion and the inappropriate expression of "what everyone may feel but no one says" (Roisman (2005) 76; also Sutton (1980) 180–182, Ambrose (2005) 23–24, 35, Roisman (2005) 73–79). After the performance of tragedy, the satyr play—with satyrs onstage—may bring about a comic relief through its optimistic and (over)simplified worldview (Sutton (1980) 159–179). It may also signal the reinstatement of the masculine status quo. This can be a return to "a masculine collective consciousness based in libidinal awareness" after the experience of "feminine" emotions unleashed by tragedy (Hall (1998) 14, 37); or, more broadly, a "reassertion of masculine entitlement and success, and of the legitimacy and efficacy (perhaps even attainability) of male desires." In this case, the satyrChorus represents the Athenians' slaves, children, and less inhibited male selves

(Griffith (2005) 183–5). Given that the *Alcestis* lacks a satyrchorus, what is the extent to which the play performs a function similar to that of the satyr play?

Attempts to answer this question take three divergent directions. From one point of view, while the *Alcestis* presents an optimistic and reassuring worldview and thus resembles a satyr play, this fundamental resemblance is not sustained. It is replaced by the worldview of tragedy instead (Sutton (1980) 183). Alternatively, the play is seen as offering a unique experience that collides with audience expectations which have been shaped by years of watching satyr plays conclude tragic trilogies. As a single play, the *Alcestis* reflects a whole day of dramatic performances: its first part corresponds to the three tragedies of the day and the second shorter and more Dionysiac part with its (nonironic) happy ending corresponds to the satyr play. Although we witness a consistent gender reversal through the performance of the Chorus and an increasingly effeminized Admetus, the ending restores both Alcestis and Admetus to their proper gender roles. It thus brings about a (familiar from satyr drama) restoration of masculine identity (Slater (2005) 84–96).

The third approach looks more closely at the play's historical context. On the basis that a satyrless play never occupies the fourth place before or after 438 BCE, Euripides must be responding to the political circumstances of the day. Indeed, he protests against the legal decree of Morychides (valid 440/43–437/6), which forbids *kômôidein*. The wording of the decree could be taken to refer to not just comedy but all types of mockery, play, and revelry (*kômos*). If satyr play is seen as injecting elements of revelry into tragedy, with the *Alcestis* Euripides shows the Athenians what they are missing: not only does he eliminate the satyrs; he also shows that only Heracles, the satyr play figure, can bring back Alcestis and hence revelry and celebration. Thus the *Alcestis* responds to contemporary legislation and undermines its authority onstage (Marshall (2000) 229–236).

The question of genre clearly brings together issues of form, content, performative occasion, audience expectations, and emotional effect with different emphases in every case. Seeing the *Alcestis* as a tragicomedy locates the play in an anachronistic category which, however, rings true regarding certain aspects of its tone. The term prosatyric points to a need or preference for a special category for this one play but requires that we use caution in applying to the *Alcestis* critical approaches to satyr play, which come with their own uncertainties and ambiguities. The interpretive value of this preference has been questioned, given that it creates a subgenre out of one play only, even though we cannot be certain that no other satyrless plays ever occupied the fourthplay slot (Mastronarde (2010) 57). At the same time, this generic designation opens up a range of interpretive possibilities for a fourthplace play where *kômôidein* is circumscribed and eroticism ambiguous at best. Approaching the *Alcestis* as a tragedy remains true to its form but calls for qualifications regarding its tone and position as well as conceptions of "the tragic." While formally a tragedy (even) according to Aristotle's definition of "the second best tragic structure" with a kind of pleasure more appropriate to comedy (*Poetics*, ch. 13), the *Alcestis* then presents a unique hybrid in our extant corpus that frustrates generic expectations (Segal (1993) 40), or, to put it positively, lies at the intersection of genres. Genre should then provide a useful heuristic tool that helps us trace the different tones and possible emotional effects of the *Alcestis* (Mastronarde (1999–2000) 38) in ways

that bring out intergeneric affinities that both playwrights and audiences were attuned to in the fifth century (Mastronarde (2010) 43–62). As such, generic considerations can give us access to multiple layers of the play's meaning in its original context. The emotional register of the play to which I will return in my final section forms one such layer.

2 Structure, Characterization, and Major Themes in the *Alcestis*

Another important nexus of issues concerns the relationship between structure, characterization, and the dramatization of key themes such as death, *xenia* (guestfriendship), *philia* (friendship), and betrayal. An additional question is whether the very idea of "character" is an appropriate category, especially in a play with the structural and generic peculiarities of the *Alcestis*. Interpretations that focus on the interrelation between structure and characterization occupy a wide spectrum. On one end, the structure and movement of the plot toward the happy ending reveal the characters' unambiguous virtues. On the other end, consistent ironies undercut this movement and undermine the characters' motivation and the happy ending itself. These two approaches are best represented by Burnett and Smith respectively and have been highly influential.

Burnett (1965, 1971) traces in the *Alcestis* a sacrifice plot (Alcestis' selfsacrifice) and a rescue piece (Heracles' action) combined with great compression. Parallel episodes in the two plots bring out the key themes of the play with *philia* occupying a central position among them. The double plot culminates in a truly happy ending which rewards both central characters for their true virtue with miraculous blessedness. Alcestis displays her virtue by sacrificing her life for what she was always dedicated to: her marriage and the private world of the *oikos* (home). Admetus respects both the home in its public expressions through guestfriendship and his *philia* with Alcestis. Even his offensive attitude toward his father Pheres reveals how highly he values his *philia* with his wife. The final scene reaffirms both this loyalty and his nobility since Admetus passes Heracles' (and Alcestis') test: by accepting the veiled girl, he "agrees to receive the property of Heracles (at the cost of pain to himself), while he refuses to accept a substitute for his wife" ((1965) 251). Then the ideal becomes real: two people who consistently choose virtue over joy are restored to happiness.

Smith (1960), on the other hand, reads in the *Alcestis* a different kind of structural duality: a melodramatic plot (the rescue of Admetus from misfortune and that of Alcestis from death) combined with an "ironic structure." The latter consists of a subplot (the testing of Admetus) and various elements of theme and imagery. While the melodramatic plot is an interpretation of the Alcestismyth, the ironic structure simultaneously offers a critique of the ideas implied by that very plot. Admetus' characterization is instrumental for this dynamic because he is seen from two points of view: "as the worthy friend of god and demigod, whose character inspires others to help him, and as a selfcentered, cowardly, and shortsighted man. [. . .] The second, though thoroughly developed, is developed almost totally by indirection, by irony, except in the scene with Pheres" (Smith, 129). Recurrent themes—loyalty, nobility, betrayal,

baseness—encourage the audience to retain a critical distance and reconsider Admetus' character and the values of the myth itself. Betrayal is key. Unlike Burnett, Smith sees in the final scene a conspicuous display of Admetus' betrayal. Admetus fails the test and, through the fulfillment of the ironic themes, "the incredible happens. Death is defeated. The reward of virtue goes to Admetus" (Smith, 56).

Burnett and Smith not only illuminate key elements of structure; they have also been instrumental in foregrounding virtue and its role in human happiness as issues central to the play. At the same time, both interpretations raise certain objections. While Burnett's analysis offers a sophisticated approach to certain aspects of Euripidean poetic technique and characterization, it often inordinately idealizes Admetus. For instance, at his encounter with his father, Admetus is seen as an Apollofigure in an act of driving Pheres, a Deathfigure, away from his home. Burnett, moreover, seems to suggest that Admetus' acts, though virtuous and graceful, are separate from considerations of justice. If so, is Admetus' good fortune—and human prosperity more generally—to be seen as independent of (conscious) moral choice? (For further critical points, see Knox (1972) 272–275.) Smith's approach, on the other hand, has been characterized as "a little too exclusively intellectual" and not attuned to a change in Admetus that invites our emotional engagement, even if temporarily (Conacher (1967) 339). The question of sympathy often underlies discussions of the play's ironies or ambiguities. Betrayal remains prominent among these elements: Alcestis' "betrayal" in deserting Admetus to die for him and Admetus' (possible) betrayal in accepting the veiled woman. I will return to the question of sympathy as a theme within the play itself in section 4.

In terms of characterization, both Admetus and Alcestis have invited highly contradictory responses. Several critics warn against inquiring into Admetus' state of mind at the moment before the play begins when he allowed his wife to die for him, since the play dramatizes Admetus' response to Alcestis' death, not that earlier negotiation (Lloyd (1985) esp. 119–121, Buxton (1987) 25–26, Dyson (1988) 13 and 19). Admetus' supporters see genuine grief for Alcestis' death as well as admirable hospitality toward both Apollo and Heracles with no cowardice implied. Admetus accepts Alcestis' idea of indissoluble marriage and remains constant till the very end, a stance that renders him worthy of Alcestis and justifies a miracle (Myres (1917) esp. 210–18). His encounter with Pheres brings out the false charges of cowardice that he incurs by accepting Alcestis' sacrifice (Dyson (1988) 19–20); on the other hand, it may indicate a fluctuation in his ability to judge right that, nevertheless, does not make him less admirable (Siropoulos (2000) 190). Similarly, when Admetus is not to be admired, the emphasis falls on his successfully negotiating the problems that occur within the limits of the dramatic action. The final test counts as one of them: Admetus, on this view, is not taking the veiled woman as a second wife and, therefore, does not break his promise to Alcestis (Lloyd (1985) 129). The positive assessment of Admetus, however, can be seriously challenged not least—as we will see—through the allusions to marriage at the end of the play.

In the case of Alcestis, most readers see her selfsacrifice as an act of heroism. How such heroism affects the play's genderdynamic is discussed in the next section. Alcestis' "warmth" and love for Admetus, however, and hence the motivation behind her choice to die remain a matter of controversy. If she is sacrificing herself, is she doing it for love? Our very

preoccupation with Alcestis' "love" may be misleading since it conflates *philia* with *eros* (sexual desire), the latter possibly but not necessarily present in Hellenic marriage (Michelini (1987) 326). Some scholars suggest that Alcestis' sacrifice and emotional outburst indeed show love for Admetus (Dyson (1988) 13) even if such love is "hardly conscious" (Murray (1915) xiii). Alcestis' request that Admetus not remarry may reveal her human side since it may be partly motivated by jealousy and a wish to control Admetus' future engagement with the rules of reciprocity regarding marriage (Padilla (2000) 194) or by both love and jealousy (Dale (1954) xxvi–xxvii).

Other critics view Alcestis as selfinterested, cold, or even indifferent. Her sacrifice reveals ambition and a desire for glory (van Lennep (1949) 15–16). By requesting that Admetus not marry again, she shows a "coldness of contained fury" because she has come to despise him and desires that he will never be happy again (Rosenmeyer (1963) 230). From a similar point of view, the play dramatizes a dysfunctional relationship that can only produce indifference. Alcestis' farewell to her marriage bed merely reflects her duty and function in the home. The recurrent verbal theme of *prodidômi* (meaning both *to desert* and *to betray*) in the couple's exchange suggests that they both make extreme demands on each other in a cold relationship devoid of communication (Beye (1959) 122–127). Thus not only do changing ideas about love and desire often influence or interfere with our understanding of Alcestis. Naturally enough it also remains difficult to classify the range of emotions that Alcestis experiences as she prepares for her impending death. In assessing Alcestis' investment in her husband, it is significant to take into account the male Chorus' views. After her death and last address to Admetus, for instance, the old men not only sing of Alcestis' future commemoration in rituals (445–453); they also wish that they themselves could have loving wives like her (472–3).

A number of approaches arrive at an understanding of character by focusing on the themes of *philia* and *xenia* which define the relations between the different characters. These institutionalized values impose conflicting demands on the characters and complicate their moral choices and emotional responses. The demands of Admetus' *philia* with Alcestis contrast sharply with those of his *xenia*relationship with Heracles. His reconciliation of the two poses the question of his "tragic learning" and the valuation of *philia* in the play itself. On the one hand, Admetus' education in human values is seen as too shortlived to have any lasting effect. He realizes "the nature and value of a sentiment that does not exist explicitly for his own material advantage *only* when his fortunes and those of his house are at their nadir" (Schein (1988) 203). For the most part, however, Admetus understands both familyrelations and guestfriendship as selfserving. And he is eventually saved through his friendships with divinities that are, by definition, amoral. Thus the play makes us question the human relevance of the story (Schein, 204–5). Despite the happy ending that cuts short Admetus' learning, other scholars find that his experience of *philia* affects him deeply. Padilla ((2000) 186, 198–206) suggests that his choices lead to a social devaluation that actually teaches him a lesson about the nature of friendship. In the course of the play, he realizes that he can never properly compensate Alcestis, he embarrasses Heracles with his lie, loses honor (*timê*) by disowning his parents, and has his reputation tarnished by Heracles' final trick. Thus Admetus comes to understand a more humanistic set of values as part of *philia* that transcends the principles of

aristocratic gift exchange.

Participation in all such relationships is of course conditioned by an unusual centrality of death in the play. Death—a character in the prologue, an option for Admetus and a possible choice for his loved ones, an onstage experience for Alcestis, and an event the Chorus attempts to interpret and ritually respond to—forms a pervasive presence that everyone has to live with and eventually reconsider. Because Admetus receives the gift to negotiate his own death, he may appear unheroic but not necessarily devoid of positive characteristics such as honesty and the ability, once again, to learn and change. According to Bradley ((1980) 117–126), precisely because of his inability to recognize the necessity of death, Admetus operates in a state of confusion and thus makes promises to Alcestis and Heracles that contradict each other. His lack of moral stability contributes to the erosion of all the relationships he participates in—marriage and love, friendship, and kinship—and renders the ending ironic. The characters that passionately adhere to their ideology end up winning unsatisfactory lives: Alcestis will live again with Admetus while Pheres' life will be embittered by his son's alienation from his parents. "Only Admetus, who had no system at all, [. . .] discovers that his decidedly unheroic posture—nay, his bungling failure in virtually every human encounter—leaves him accessible to a special grace by which he is free to come to terms with death and thereby [. . .] enjoy the lasting gift of life" (Bradley, 126). According to Nielsen, however, Apollo's gift offers the humans in the play an inhuman choice and thoroughly corrupts their conception of virtue, truth, and human dignity. All characters in the play become selfserving while Admetus' final luck "seems to outweigh considerations of justice" (Nielsen (1976) 100). We see, in other words, that the role of death in the play emphatically brings back considerations of whether and how conscious choice (and therefore moral sensibilities) and good fortune affect each other.

The centrality of death and the vastly divergent assessments of the play's characters have also invited an interpretive move away from characterization and toward further examination of the theme of death. The myth of Admetus becomes an ideal vehicle for exploring both survival and the utility of death in perceiving and organizing human life. On the one hand, the task of surviving is seen as the real focus of the play. Both the Chorus' role and Admetus' choice to conceal Alcestis' death from Heracles "in deference to the ongoing ties of the larger social world" aim to move Admetus through and beyond grief (Murnaghan (1999–2000) 114–16). Thus the *Alcestis*—like tragedy as a genre, mourning, and the funeral oration—makes death easier to bear: it helps survivors to see themselves as part of a community and makes the experience of survival seem less selfinterested (Murnaghan, 110). From a different perspective, the play becomes an interesting defense of death itself (Gregory (1979) 260–270). With the traditional attributes of death—unpredictability, inevitability, irreversibility—suspended, all qualitative distinctions in life are lost: the present as known and the future as unknown merge together; Alcestis' selfsacrifice is also a *nosos* (sickness) and a suicideact and thus loses its value and glory; Admetus' life becomes a living death; time is identified with life itself and *charis* (favor/gratitude) with betrayal. As a restorer of differences then, Heracles brings back the distinctions that render life worth living. Gregory, however, suggests that for such restoration to happen Admetus' death must be at the background of the ending, a cancellation of Apollo's gift that restores Admetus to a desirable ignorance of his mortality.

The preference for an examination of structural elements and central themes rather than characterization in the *Alcestis* oftentimes reflects an underlying question: is character a valid category of analysis in Greek tragedy? The delineation of character is usually based on tracing elements of agency, motivation, (moral) choice, and psychological individuality in dramatic personae. A number of scholars see such attributes as, if not insufficiently developed in Greek tragedy, then not a prime concern. Character is rather a distinctly modern, postShakespearean concern in the interpretation of drama. Focusing on character in the *Alcestis* appears unsatisfactory partly because "a large element of subjectivity" enters into psychological approaches (Gregory (1979) 259). Dale especially argues that "what controls a succession of situations is not a firmly conceived unity of character but the shape of the whole action." In turn, it is not attributes of character that define each situation but "the rhetoric of the situation" (the Aristotelian *dianoia*) (Dale (1954) xxvii) or the institutions that the characters represent (such as the *oikos* for Des Bouvrie (1990)).

The range of readings presented in this section, however, supports the claim that character and action can never be clearly and neatly separated from each other (Easterling (1990) 88). Since the different characters in the play respond to the dramatic events in distinct ways and often present their motives, their perception of themselves, and their thoughts on how others view them, the *Alcestis* invites analysis of character in a dynamic way (for other critical views of Dale, see Conacher (1981) 5–10, Scully (1986) 135–144). Such analysis does not aim to define the depths of the characters' inwardness, which remains elusive for real and fictive people alike (Easterling (1990) 99). Rather it brings to center stage the effect of the peculiar reality of death on institutionalized relationships such as *xenia* and *philia* and the (characters') values that (can) sustain them.

3 Gender

Alcestis' heroic selfsacrifice and Admetus' indulgence in grief are often interpreted as constituting an inversion of gender that dominates the play. By winning public recognition (*kleos*), Alcestis not only embodies the ideal wife; she also shows herself to be "the best" (*aristê*) and thus acquires male heroic status (Segal (1992a) 9–16, Foley (2001) 302–331; for Bassi (1989) 25–26, Alcestis' maleness jeopardizes the illusion of the female (actress) onstage). Admetus correspondingly becomes effeminized through practices and emotions associated with women and the indoors: he promises to quit all pleasures (remarrying, wine, and music) and to devote his life to mourning and honoring his dead wife. This inversion constitutes a challenge to male authority but is itself subverted in the end. The end of the *Alcestis*, most readers concur, (re)establishes the male status quo: a transaction between males results in Alcestis' reintegration in Admetus' home through a symbolic (re)marriage replete with the gestures of unveiling the bride (*anakalyptêria*) and taking her by the wrist (see Foley (1985) 87–88, Halleran (1988) 125–129, Rehm (1994) 84–96 on marriage motifs). Most questions about gender reversal regard the action before the final scene and its effect on how we interpret Alcestis' final reunion with her husband. Interestingly, Admetus' promise to keep in his bed a statue of his wife figures prominently in discussions of the play's gender dynamic.

Some scholars suggest that we can trace signs of the final return to gender norms throughout the play despite the apparent inversion of gender roles. For O'Higgins, Admetus' idea to keep in his bed a statue of his wife essentially restricts Alcestis' commemoration to the private realm as opposed to public acknowledgement, such as the establishment of a hero cult. It also effaces her exceptional virtue through its association with Pandora, the female artifice par excellence and the source of all evils. Similarly, Heracles' intervention results in a striking transformation. The assertive and competitive Alcestis we see at the beginning of the play turns into a passive prize with no voice, very much like the imaginary statue itself. Even her heroic death is effaced by the metaphorical death of (re)marriage (O'Higgins (1993) 92–95; Poole (1987) 144 also views Alcestis' silence as a restriction of her power. Trammell (1941) and Betts (1965) interpret it on a ritual basis. Dale (1954) 129–130 and others (vs. Heath (1987) 276–280 and Rehm (1994) 196) attribute it to the availability of two actors only). Seen from a primarily Freudian perspective, the statue becomes a mechanism of control, an instance of the fetishization of Alcestis that culminates in the final scene during a joke between men. In this case, the "textual praise of a woman who actively seeks her passivity is one way to achieve feminine complicity with patriarchy" (Rabinowitz (1993) 99).

Other interpretations, however, suggest that the gender inversion brings about a positive change in Admetus despite the eventual return to patriarchal order. Segal traces an interesting overlap between the confusion of gender and spatial divisions. While Alcestis is offered a heroic burial and bardic praise, Admetus remains attached to the (female) home. Even then, the only possible heroism Alcestis leaves for him is the violation of the domestic space through an inappropriate offer of hospitality to Heracles at a time of grieving (Segal (1992a) esp. 14–16). At the same time, Admetus indulges in mourning, a distinctly female practice for the Greeks after Homer. While feminizing Admetus, his participation in ritualized grief also contributes to his emotional and intellectual development. The idea here is that Admetus' effeminate feelings lead him to a significant realization of the conditions of mortality (Segal (1992b)). Admetus' feminine learning also compares to the experience of marriage as ritual death common to most brides in Athens. He cuts himself off from his natal family through his argument with Pheres; but he comes to appreciate (and eventually relive) the dependence on his spouse (Rehm (1994) 95–96) and to accept both death and a new life (Foley (1985) 88).

A very different reading of heroic genderreversal (Slater (2000) 107–119) situates the *Alcestis* in the context of the Great Dionysia, in particular the parade of the war orphans that preceded the dramatic performances, during which the city both mourned those fallen in battle and congratulated itself on raising their orphaned sons. Since Admetus transfers all (family) loyalty to Alcestis, the home becomes "a metonym for the city" and the fate of his orphaned children and Alcestis' sacrifice gain in significance. Though intended as private consolation, even Admetus' imaginary statue contributes—temporarily—to Alcestis' glorification because it reminds the audience of public aristocratic statues (the *kouroi* and *korai*) and the heroized dead. In the final scene, "the ironic awareness that male and female selfsacrifice are differently understood and honored [. . .] does not overwhelm the happiness of the ending" (Slater, 117). The gracious silence (of both Alcestis and the Chorus) is the glory of the Athenian wife while Alcestis' return to the household does not efface her remarkable sacrifice.

The drama's experiment with gender reversal then invites the Athenian audience to appreciate more deeply the value of sacrifice for both city and home.

The audience or reader is called to decide whether the inversion and restoration of gender roles results in any kind of nonironic emotional and intellectual change that would justify Admetus' joyful claim "now we have taken on a better life than the former one" (1157–8). Alcestis' final silence remains troubling especially when juxtaposed to her powerful eloquence in the first part of the play. Though the final return to familiar social norms does not efface Alcestis' public recognition—as it cannot efface her earlier heroic act—it definitely limits it. Before this return to the familiar norms of sociopolitical reality, Foley suggests that it is the *anodos* (return) pattern of Persephone's story that lies at the background of the plot and provides the carefully circumscribed sphere where genderplay and the heroization of Alcestis are allowed (Foley (2001) 331). Interestingly, even at the end, Alcestis embodies "the fantasized combination of concubine and spouse otherwise absent from tragedy" (Foley, 330). This is unique: the initial gender inversion resolves itself into an erotic wishfulfillment that somehow even improves the conventional gender roles according to which wives and concubines are two distinct kinds of women. This resolution combined with other erotic echoes in the play adds to what I will suggest is a tension between different expressions of pity and *eros* that remains underestimated in current scholarship. As it pervades and heightens the incongruities of the play, this tension defines its emotional tenor and, therefore, its meaningful ironies.

4 Incongruous Feelings? Pity and *Eros* in the *Alcestis*

The distinctive character of the *Alcestis* as a fourthplace play raises the question of the play's emotional registers: what kind of emotions does the play dramatize and potentially evoke? Since an examination of the full emotional spectrum of the play is not possible here, I look at aspects of its emotional discourse that point to a dynamic interplay with emotions that tend to dominate tragedy and satyr play: pity (and selfpity) and desire (*eros*). Such an analysis provides the starting point for two suggestions: (a) the *Alcestis* raises and consistently undercuts certain emotions—the Aristotelian "tragic" emotions in particular (although I leave fear aside as the less prominent of the two); (b) although the play has eliminated the bawdy satyrs, it brings back *eros* in a perplexing manner. Despite our limited knowledge of satyr plays, satyrs are usually seen as introducing an uninhibited eroticism that reasserts male desire on sexual and social levels (section 1). From its unusual position in the tetralogy, the *Alcestis* too eventually reaffirms male desire(s) and values, but only after complicating the role of *eros* by interweaving its satyric and tragic associations. I begin, however, with pity.

Grief for Alcestis' death pervades the play, and lamentation renders pity for both Alcestis and Admetus a prominent emotion. It is Admetus, however, who provides a particularly interesting casestudy partly through his expression of selfpity and his attempt to evoke pity for his suffering. Now, Aristotle famously defines pity as pain felt for someone who suffers undeservedly (*Rhetoric*, 1385b14–1386a41), a definition supported by a variety of dramatic and rhetorical cases. On this view, pity for Admetus seems to be both evoked and consistently

undermined precisely because different characters (Admetus included) invite a consistent re evaluation of his suffering and emotions.

To trace this process, we need to consider the way in which Admetus himself characterizes his emotional experience. Admetus' invocation of pity stems from what he portrays as his own metaphorical death: an intense experience of pain and grief as the result of partaking in Alcestis' real death. His loss wears him down like a burden and a disease (*baros*, *nosos*: 353, 1047–8) that echo Alcestis' experience of real death (203, 236, 385). He suffers the elimination of all pleasure (*terpsis*, 347) as he enters a desolate life indistinguishable from living death: not only does he promise that he will never remarry (328–331); as we saw, he also wishes to forgo all social interactions (336–347), a wish emphatically conveyed through his own version of the tragic utterance par excellence: "what shall I do (*ti drasô*) separated from you?" (380).

On one level, Admetus clearly deserves sympathy. The Chorus suggests that his loss is worth committing suicide for (228–232) and repeatedly shares in his grieving. On another level, pity for Admetus is consistently undermined, as the Chorus' shifting response often indicates. His selfpity appears excessive, considering especially that he is the cause of Alcestis' death. In fact, the Chorus encourages him to moderate his response because he has succeeded in saving his own life (928–930) (see also Scully (1986) 141–144 and Swift (2010) 352–364 on Admetus' absorption in his grief). More strikingly, despite his proclaimed attachment to Alcestis, he calls her a stranger (533; also 646) and dismisses her death in order to host Heracles, an act that the Chorus, initially at least, judges as foolish (551–2). His experience of shame after Alcestis' burial also problematizes (tragic) pity. Admitting "now I understand" (*arti manthanô*), Admetus comes to see himself as an enemy would (954) and rehearses accusations of cowardice and selfcenteredness against his own self (955–960) that recall those of Pheres (694–705) but are now attributed to the whole community of Thessalians. By internalizing Pheres' accusations, he invites both pity in a new manner and, at the same time, a deeper interrogation of the honesty of his selfperception and hence of his deserving his interlocutors' and the audience's sympathy. In the final scene, Admetus refuses to receive the veiled woman because he fears a double accusation by his dead wife and his people (1057–61). His very fear indicates that such an accusation would be justified. And he eventually does invite such blame by accepting the woman and choosing to share in Heracles' victory instead of honoring his *philia* with Alcestis.

This constant summoning and undermining of pity for Admetus forms one of the play's significant internal tensions. Though most plays call for a reevaluation of characters as the action develops, in Admetus' case this reassessment forms part of the play's dramatic focus with special attention to his selfpity and recurrent claims to sympathy. For the audience, pity for Admetus may be further undercut by the knowledge of the play's ending, guaranteed by both Apollo and Heracles. This sustained tension leaves us with the question of whether the joyful —for Admetus at least—ending eventually eliminates pity altogether.

Although questions of *philia* and the appropriate hierarchy of attachments dominate the play, the *Alcestis* also brings back *eros* in more ways than are usually acknowledged. As with pity,

eros too is evoked to be undermined, through juxtaposing its satyric and tragic associations. The term *eros* itself is explicitly mentioned only once (and indeed at a turning moment in the play—l.1080); yet erotic associations are often evoked and become more prominent in the last part of the play, as we already saw with questions especially of genre and gender in the previous sections. The first intimations of tragic *eros* are indirectly introduced during Admetus' last exchange with Alcestis. Admetus wishes to keep a statue of his wife, the source of "cold pleasure," in his bed (353). (Some erotic connotations of his wish were discussed in section 3.) The imaginary statue of Alcestis points to the pleasure of *eros*, now eliminated from Admetus' life just like the beautiful statues of Helen that Menelaus keeps in his palace and comes to hate for their lifelessness and inability to bring back Aphrodite (Aeschylus, *Agam.* 416–19). Admetus further renounces all pleasure in revels, music, wine, women, and friends (336–347). He reiterates this decision upon return from Alcestis' burial (950–953), when he realizes that he is in love with the dead and longs for their realm (866–7). Thus the ideal wife brings home, literally and metaphorically, the pleasure of life that includes and transcends erotic desire. It is the loss of this pleasure that Admetus laments (with some excess, as pointed out) and thereby elicits some of the tragic associations of *eros*—soon to be undercut.

When brought forth explicitly, however, erotic desire has primarily satyric associations. It is Heracles, the most satyric character of the play, who brings up Aphrodite. In his initial ignorance of Alcestis' death, he advises her grieving servant to enjoy life with humility and "honor Aphrodite as absolutely the sweetest of all the gods for mortals. For that goddess is indeed most kindly (*eumenês*)" (790–1, trans. by Conacher (1988)). The servant is then compelled to reveal Alcestis' death which triggers the play's happy reversal. The mention of Aphrodite at this turning point prompts, as it were, the erotic echoes that proliferate as we approach the happy ending.

But before that we, once more, discern different intimations of *eros* in the Chorus' last song. The old men sing of the force of goddess Necessity that neither gods nor mortals can assuage. Even though their description of Necessity (976–7, 984) points to death, it is also reminiscent of Cypris and *eros* in other tragedies and of the inescapable violence of desire (e.g. esp. *Hippolytus* 522–529; also *Medea* 629–635). If we are indeed to think of Aphrodite and desire as (part of) Necessity, there are interesting, if tentative, implications regarding desire in the play. Because of the goddess, "with your tears you will never bring back from below those perished" (986–7), sing the old men to Admetus. But they are soon proven wrong. Alcestis does return, a development that prompts the question: is that because of or in spite of the goddess? If Necessity equals death, Heracles defeats it. If, however, we are to think of Aphrodite, Necessity as *eros* seems indeed to win a victory through Heracles and brings about a (re)marriage that incorporates erotic desire (See also section 3). In Admetus' final proclamation of good fortune (1158) we may see, partly at least, the workings of Heracles' kindly Aphrodite.

May we? The question persists, as the connotations of desire seem to remain slippery through the very end of the play. The Chorus, as we saw above, reminds us of Aphrodite in tragedy who, in plays like the *Hippolytus*, appears in her vengeful guise and raises complex questions about the role of desire in human action. The final testing of Admetus raises similar questions

when Heracles suggests that the desire for another woman and a new marriage will replace Admetus' current *eros* and attachment to Alcestis (1080, 1087). As soon as Admetus' acceptance of the veiled woman prompts considerations of betrayal for the pursuit of new desires, the revelation of the woman to be Alcestis opportunely silences them. Alcestis herself is also temporarily restrained by ritual silence (*anaudos*, 1143), while Admetus inaugurates statewide celebratory dances and sacrifices. His unequivocal joy for his new life with his alluring noble wife may reassert the legitimacy of male desires in ways that recall satyric resolutions. Yet the silencing necessary for such legitimation is tellingly brought forth as is the need for its (ritual) justification.

The *Alcestis* then plays with both pity and erotic desire. It juxtaposes pity for the experience of death with both tragic and satyric intimations of *eros*. Pity for Admetus is evoked, scrutinized, and consistently subverted. And as Heracles initiates a symbolic remarriage between Admetus and his wife, *eros* and pleasure seem to prevail in their happy (satyric) expression—for the male participants, at the very least. If Alcestis' final silence problematizes the celebratory ending, it also poses the question of the play's resonating emotions: does such ending eliminate tragic pity and *eros* altogether? Very likely it does not. Rather the dramatization, evocation, and undermining of pity and desire throughout the play invite a continuous reassessment of most emotional responses (within the play and the theater) and the understanding that they reflect. Admetus' final joy at his reunion with Alcestis presents the last such response left now for the audience to assess. It is most significant that this kind of engagement is invited primarily through pity and desire, emotions prominent in the genres that define the identity of the play. As an unusual generic hybrid, the *Alcestis* not only mixes the emotions that are central to satyr play and tragedy; it also seriously and consciously plays with the possibilities of feeling and thinking that they invite.

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FURTHER READING

Given the diverse and controversial interpretations of the *Alcestis*, suggestions here include additional approaches to the play as well as further readings on issues already discussed in the chapter. A range of rationalist or highly ironic interpretations offer ingenious—if often disputed—readings according to which Alcestis never dies but only collapses while preparing for her own death in a sophisticated play in which Euripides criticizes traditional theology (Verrall (1913)); or Alcestis dies but never returns to life; rather she is replaced by her own statue (Stieber (1998)) or by a different woman while Heracles achieves an (unusual for his character) intellectual victory over Admetus (Fitzgerald (1991)). The *Alcestis* has also been singled out for its selfconsciousness as a play for the stage, with special emphasis on its ambiguities and the question whether mimetic art can offer a satisfactory response to the fear of death (Lorch (1988); Segal (1993); Luschnig (1995); Gounaridou (1998)). Numerous readings explore different aspects of the interrelation between structure, central themes, and genre (Golden (1970); Musurillo (1972); Hamilton (1978); Castellani (1979)); or trace diverse social and moral attitudes dramatized in the play by focusing on themes such as the household and the family, *philia*, guestfriendship, and (gift)exchange (Sicking (1967); Scodel (1979); Thury (1988); Luschnig (1990); Stanton (1990); Dellner (2000)). Further examination of what constitutes dramatic "personality" and "character" and how they are rendered intelligible in Greek tragedy offers valuable insights into the question of characterization in the *Alcestis* (Gill (1986); Gould (1990)). Regarding genre, Euripides' use of comic elements (Gregory (1999–2000)), conceptions of the "tragic" (Most (2000)) and the role of satyrs in Greek culture

(Lissarrague (1990)) all contribute to a better understanding of the *Alcestis* itself. Last, an extensive comparison between the *Alcestis* and T.S. Eliot's *Cocktail Party* (Phelan (1990)) and a discussion of numerous (poetic, theatrical, operatic) treatments of the Alcestis story from Euripides to Ted Hughes (Parker (2003)) provide insightful material for readers interested in the reception of the play.

CHAPTER 6
Medea

Laura Swift

Euripides' *Medea* remains one of the most abidingly powerful of all Greek tragedies; its themes of love, jealousy, vengeance, and infanticide continue to enthral audiences more than two thousand years after it was first produced. Unlike many of Euripides' plays, *Medea* is dominated by a single character, the eponymous heroine, and the debates which have surrounded the play often arise from the question of how we should respond to this complex protagonist. Medea's actions are among the most horrific in tragedy, culminating in the murder of her own innocent children, yet Euripides takes care to portray the motivations which lie behind these actions, and in doing so he creates a character who is in many ways sympathetic and appealing. The question of to what extent we empathize with Medea, then, is a vexed one, and one to which Euripides gives no easy answers. For as scholars have demonstrated, who Medea is, as well as what she does, is of central importance to how an ancient audience might have viewed her. This chapter will begin by exploring two important aspects of Medea's identity which might have affected the way an Athenian audience would have responded to her: her status as a foreigner, and as a woman. Finally, I shall investigate Medea's presentation in the final scene, and how the audience might have responded to the unsettling way in which Euripides chooses to end the play.

1 Medea as Barbarian?

As the Nurse's words which open the play remind us, Medea is no Greek but a Colchian, who abandoned her own land for love of Jason (1–15). Yet the importance of Medea's "barbarian" identity to understanding her actions is debated by characters throughout the play. Thus, while Denys Page in his 1938 commentary could claim that "she embodies the qualities which the fifthcentury Athenian believed to be characteristic of Orientals" (Page (1938) xxi), most modern scholars would take a more nuanced line, contrasting the ways in which Medea is "other" with those in which she is portrayed as emphatically Greek (Allan (2002) 67–79; Mastronarde (2002) 22–4).

Medea's foreign identity is mentioned regularly in the play, both by Medea herself and by the Greek characters who surround her. The Chorus' opening words describe her as "the unhappy Colchian" (133), while they conclude the *parodos* by recalling her journey "to Greece over the ocean, through the dusky seawater over the salty barrier of the Black Sea, so difficult to cross" (210–12). The Chorus may pledge their loyalty to Medea, but they continue to allude to her foreign status by repeatedly telling the story of her long seajourney to Greece (431–5, 1262–4), a motif which emphasizes her exoticism and establishes a sense of distance. In particular the image of the Symplegades or Clashing Rocks (434–5, 1263), which form an impassable barrier between Greece and Medea's homeland, heightens the sense of a natural separation

between Greeks and foreigners.

Jason emphasizes Medea's foreignness in a more pointed way, using it to suggest the superiority of Greeks over barbarians. In his debate with Medea he attempts to argue that far from having acted wrongly in abandoning her, he has in fact benefited her: "Firstly, you live in Greece instead of a barbarian land, and you understand justice and how to use the rule of law instead of giving way to force" (536–7). Jason draws on the stereotype that barbarians do not recognize the rule of law in an attempt to present Medea as morally inferior. Hence by Jason's logic Medea's violent actions reveal her barbarian nature: a point reinforced at the end of the play when he claims of the children's murder "no Greek woman would ever have dared to do this" (1339–40). Jason's stance draws on deepseated Greek stereotypes which associated foreigners with irrational and excessive behavior and so his accusations would have resonated with the Athenian audience.

However, it can be no coincidence that Euripides puts the most overt barbarianstereotyping into the mouth of Jason, the play's least sympathetic character. While Jason's rhetoric may be familiar, the audience can nevertheless see how he draws on the language of Greek superiority to cover up his own culpability in abandoning his wife and children. Though Jason proclaims the virtues of living in Greece rather than a barbarian land, the audience has already seen the desperate plight that Medea is in, with no family to protect her, and facing exile; hence Jason's words are revealed to be shallow and selfserving. It is this vulnerability, and Jason's betrayal of his oaths, which prompt Medea to violence, rather than some inherently barbarian aspect of her character. It is thus the Greek Jason who fails to respect the sanctity of oaths and the legal status which they hold, while the barbarian Medea continually criticizes Jason for his oathbreaking, and in doing so expresses a familiar Greek form of morality (160–3, 492–8, 1391–2). Jason thus uses Medea's ethnicity as an excuse, in order to deflect attention from his own failings. Moreover, Jason's depiction of Medea as a barbarian is undermined by Medea's own representation of her emotions, which are driven as much by Greek ideals and values as by barbarian ones (Friedrich (1993) 222). Thus Euripides does not simply depict traditional stereotypes of Greek and foreign ways of thinking, but rather deconstructs the polarity between them embodied in Jason's rhetoric.

Medea repeatedly represents her primary motivation as a desire for vengeance on her enemies, and a need to avoid being mocked by them. When first pondering her plans for vengeance it is the laughter of her enemies which Medea seeks to avoid (383), and she foregrounds this desire to avoid mockery when she first announces her plan to kill the children:

> I shall leave the land, fleeing from the murder of my beloved children and having brought myself to commit a most impious deed. For the laughter of enemies is not tolerable, my friends.
>
> (795–7)

The desire to avoid incurring the laughter of enemies is a common feature of male heroes, and while it may be a masculine value it is certainly a Greek one. Homeric heroes are driven above all by a concern for their reputation and status in the eyes of the wider community, while

in tragedy the desire to avoid mockery is frequently given as a characteristic of the hero (see Knox (1977) 196–9). While a fifthcentury Athenian audience might well regard such a philosophy as anachronistic and excessively individualistic, they would also be well aware of its Hellenic associations. Medea's desire to commit murder is presented not as arising from a barbarian lack of selfcontrol, but from a Greek concern for her reputation.

Thus in many ways Euripides downplays the extent to which Medea's foreign status forms a prominent part of her characterization. While Medea's foreign identity is not denied, the beliefs which influence her are predominantly Greek rather than barbarian ones. Medea's perversion of heroicage Greek values into a justification for childkilling is therefore a particularly disturbing aspect of the play. The audience is encouraged not only to reconsider the straightforward polarization of Greek versus barbarian, but also to reflect on the negative implications of these traditionally Greek ideals, and their destructive potential.

2 Medea as Woman

Gender roles and dynamics lie at the heart of *Medea*, a play which depicts a failed relationship between husband and wife (for more on gender in Euripides, see Mueller in this volume). Like many tragic females, Medea combines features which are stereotypically feminine with those which are strikingly masculine. Her ability to deceive would have been regarded as typically female. In every scene of the play, we see Medea manipulating other characters to achieve her goals. In particular, she is able to play on female stereotypes in order to manipulate the men around her: thus with Creon she stresses her maternal love for her children to persuade him to allow her more time in Corinth (340–7) and with Jason she plays up to the belief that women are overemotional and changeable in order to make him believe she has changed her mind and now accepts his decision to leave her (889–93). Yet in both cases the audience is aware that Medea is dissembling in order to manipulate her interlocutor. As soon as Creon leaves the stage, Medea drops the appearance of subservience, telling the Chorus "Do you imagine that I would have ever fawned upon this man if I had not been gaining something or hatching a plan?" (368–9). In the case of Jason, the audience knows from the start of the scene that Medea's apparent change of heart is a strategy to allow the children access to the palace. Medea picks up on Jason's misogynistic language and assumptions from his previous scene, where he spoke about the foolish nature of women (570–5). Thus when Medea pretends to be reconciled to Jason's marriage, she refers to Jason's belief that women are irrational, in order to make her dramatic change of heart appear plausible: "But we are what we are—I do not say we are wicked, but we are women. Therefore you should not imitate our nature, or repay childish behavior with more childishness" (889–91). As well as Medea's manipulative use of language, her scheming and devious character, and her use of trickery and poison were all negative female stereotypes familiar from other myths.

Yet Medea's active and bold personality, her intelligence and argumentative powers, and her desire to take action herself to achieve vengeance would have been considered male characteristics; moreover, as we have already seen, her desire to avoid mockery and to protect her honor aggressively is reminiscent of male heroism. This transgressive blending of male and

female elements in Medea's personality makes her a formidable and terrifying character, able to outwit and deceive those around her in the pursuit of her goals. Medea's decision to kill the children is presented as a conflict between her masculine desire to avoid mockery and her maternal love, as she dwells on her hopes for the children's future (1029–36) and her emotions on seeing and touching them (1040–3, 1074–5; Foley (1989)). We are encouraged to take Medea's maternal feelings towards the children seriously: she laments their prospective deaths in terms traditional for a bereaved mother, speaking of the labourpains she endured to bring them into the world (1030–1), her hopes to see them married (1026–7), and her wish to be cared for by them in her own old age (1033–5). In the previous scene, Medea's feelings for the children stand out as the truth she cannot hide amid her other deceptive statements: when Jason prays for the children's future happiness, Medea cannot help weeping (922–4), knowing that their fate has now been sealed. When Jason enquires about her tears, her answer offers a poignant glimpse of her true feelings, even as she continues to deceive her husband: "I gave birth to them, and when you prayed that the children might live, pity came over me as I wondered whether this would come to pass" (930–1). Thus Medea's feminine side is not simply portrayed as embodying negative stereotypes of women as manipulative and deceitful, but Euripides takes care also to show the nurturing aspect of femininity. Yet while the Chorus refuse to believe that Medea will be able to overcome these maternal feelings (860–5), we see Medea suppress and reject her maternal side, prioritizing instead her hatred of Jason and her desire for vengeance.

Gender roles and stereotypes are therefore important to understanding Medea's personality, yet their importance in the play goes beyond this to explore women's position in society more directly. Medea raises these issues in her first speech onstage, where in order to win the loyalty of the Chorus, she tries to bind them to her in a community of women, stressing the common difficulties of women's lives:

> Of all things that live and have a mind, we women are the most wretched. Firstly we must buy a husband at vast expense, and take a master over our bodies: this is a misfortune worse than misfortune. The greatest struggle is this: whether we get a bad man or a good one. For there is no honorable divorce for a woman, and it is not possible to refuse a husband. When she comes to new customs and habits of her husband's house, she must be a seer, since she didn't learn it at home, to learn how to handle her husband. When we have made all these efforts, if our husband lives with us and does not take the yoke of marriage badly, our life is enviable; if not, it's better to die. When a man becomes annoyed at spending time with those in the house, he can put an end to his heart's boredom by going outside, but for us it is necessary to look to one soul. They say that we live a life free from danger in the house, while they fight with the spear. The fools! I would rather stand three times with a shield in battle than give birth once.
>
> (231–51)

Medea is faced with a Chorus which is friendly but not necessarily loyal to her, for, as she notes in the opening words of her speech, they are "women of Corinth" (214), and she is a stranger in their midst. Her strategy is therefore to build a shared identity, based on the

common experience of being a woman, and to emphasize to the Chorus how much they have in common rather than what separates them, exemplified by the repeated use of firstperson plurals in this section of her speech ("we women," "we must take a husband," "a master over our bodies"). Medea focuses on the limitations and indignities of women's lives, and the ways in which they are held to standards different to those which govern their husbands' behavior. Her account highlights the weak spots and flashpoints of women's position in contemporary Athenian society, and for this reason the speech has been of particular importance to feminist scholars. Medea presents marriage as a form of slavery, describing the woman's husband as a "master"; yet ironically while it is the masters who pay to purchase their slaves, in a marriage the women are compelled to purchase their own masters through the provision of a dowry. She draws out the inequalities inherent in the Greek concept of marriage: the dependence of the woman on her husband contrasts with the man's freedom and his ability to obtain entertainment and sexual pleasure elsewhere. This section of the speech ends with the provocative claim that childbirth is more dangerous and admirable than warfare. Greek thought regularly compares childbirth and soldiering as the respective dangers faced by men and women; for example, in Sparta the only people to be allowed the honor of a named gravestone were men who died in battle and women who died in childbirth (Plutarch *Lycurgus* 27), recognizing the two activities as comparable and equally important to the state. Yet Medea goes beyond this, representing childbirth as three times more hazardous than warfare, and thus implying that women's efforts should be honored and recognized more than men's.

As well as expressing the difficulty of being a woman, Medea's speech helps the audience to understand why she feels that her vengeance is justified, for she explains the importance of marriage to a woman, and hence the duty that husbands have within a patriarchal system to abide by their responsibilities. This is of central importance in understanding not only Medea's attitude towards Jason, but how Jason's behavior would have appeared to a Greek audience. Medea has fulfilled her obligations as a wife, remaining faithful and loyal to Jason, and most importantly providing him with two healthy sons. When speaking to Jason, Medea emphasizes her fertility as an additional reason that Jason's behavior breaches social norms, since she suggests that had she been childless Jason would have been justified in seeking a new wife (489–91). Similarly, Aegeus is quick to condemn Jason's actions when he hears that Jason has abandoned Medea and taken another woman: "Surely he has really not dared such a disgraceful deed?" (695). As a neutral outsider (and King of Athens), Aegeus' criticism of Jason is important, since it emphasizes how outrageous Jason's behavior would appear to be to a reasonable observer, and so further indicates a husband's responsibility to respect his wife's position. Towards the end of the play, Jason criticizes Medea for her vengeance by expressing his disbelief that a dysfunctional marriage could lead to such bloody consequences:

Jason:

You thought it right to kill them because of the marriage bed?

Medea:

Do you think that is a small source of pain for a woman?

Jason:

Yes, if she has any sense.
(1367–9)

While Jason dismissively regards Medea's motivations as arising from mere sexual jealousy, Medea's earlier explanation of what marriage means to a woman demonstrates that he is wrong to give marriage such little weight. The stability of a marriage is indeed a crucial issue for women, for as Medea has told us at the start of the play, women must "look to one soul" (247) for their happiness, and the success of their lives depends on the attitude of their husbands.

The final section of Medea's opening speech uses the rhetoric of gender to justify Medea's desire for vengeance, for having emphasized the aspects of a female life she shares with the Chorus, she goes on to isolate herself from them and to explain how their experience as Corinthian women is different from hers (252–63):

> But the same argument does not apply to you as to me; for you have this city and your father's home, the benefit of life and the company of friends, but I, deserted and citiless, am treated outrageously by my husband, taken as booty from a barbarian land, with no mother, no brother, no relative to give me anchorage in this disaster. And so I ask to gain this much from you: if a way or means should be found for me to punish my husband for these evils, to keep silent.

Medea lists the normal "safety nets" which assure women protection from bad marriages in order to stress her own vulnerability. Unlike the Chorus, she lacks the protection of her paternal house, or of the wider community, and it is for this reason that she asks them to support her vengeance. Medea is thrown back onto her own resources; since she has no other protectors, she argues, she has no choice but to take action herself, and the Chorus is persuaded by this argument, telling her that her punishment of Jason is "just" (*endikôs*, 267).

To the watching Athenian audience, Medea's account of female life would surely have been provocative and thoughtprovoking: she analyzes contemporary gender relations from a female perspective, and her criticisms of the prevailing ideology are powerful ones. Yet when we interpret the gender politics of the speech, we should not overlook that the speech does not stand alone but fulfils a specific rhetorical purpose within the play. As some scholars have noted, Medea's account of the wretchedness of female life is played up for persuasive effect, and she deliberately elides or suppresses aspects of the system which seek to protect women (Allan (2002) 53). For example, she attacks the dowry system which compels a woman to "buy a master," yet the audience would also have recognized the role of dowries in encouraging stable marriages. A husband was required to return the dowry if he chose to divorce his wife. Thus the system was designed to provide financial incentives for husbands to remain loyal, and therefore to offer some protection for women against flighty husbands such as Jason (MacDowell (1978) 88). Similarly, Medea's description of herself as "taken as booty from a barbarian land" (256) is highly misleading, for the audience has already heard the Nurse's account of Medea's elopement, where she tells us that Medea sailed "with her heart struck by love for Jason" (8). Medea chose to make a marriage against her father's wishes, and to reject

her father's house in favor of total dependency on Jason; yet as Medea herself implies, the ongoing connection to a woman's paternal house was one way in which she could be protected if her marriage turned out to be a bad one. Similarly, Medea's complaint that she has no brother to protect her (257) evokes the myth that Medea herself murdered her brother to facilitate Jason's escape from Colchis, an extreme demonstration of Medea's rejection of her paternal relatives in favor of her new marriage. Thus the effect of Medea's powerful rhetoric is ambiguous: are we, like the Chorus, captivated by it, or do we question its validity? As the play goes on, and we see Medea successfully manipulating other characters by appealing to their weak spots, we are further encouraged to reflect upon her opening speech, and to wonder whether the gender alliance she constructs is a legitimate one, or whether it is simply a rhetorical ploy to achieve her objectives.

The speech raises women's position in society in order to build a female alliance with the Chorus; they are asked to put aside any concerns they have about the legitimacy of Medea's vengeance, or its effects on the Corinthian community they belong to, and to support her on the basis of a shared understanding of the difficulties of women's lot. The Chorus respond enthusiastically to this, singing an ode which opens with a description of the overturning of the status quo: "Uphill flow the waters of sacred rivers, and the whole order of justice is overturned" (410–11). They see Medea's story as marking an end to the patriarchal system, as they claim that not only will men's bad deeds now be brought to light (412–13), but women's reputation will now be restored and they will be regarded with honor (415–17). Yet the community of women Medea creates is ironically undermined by her ultimate choice of vengeance, which strikes at the heart of the female values she and the Chorus share; not only does the murder require Medea to overrule her own female instincts to nurture her children, it is also greeted with horror by the Chorus, who find it hard to imagine that Medea will be able to go through with the murders (860–5). The gender conflict in the play thus operates at two levels: the external level, where Medea forms a community with the Corinthian women against Jason and the men, and the internal level, where Medea's masculine and female sides fight for mastery. Though the Chorus respond to Medea's call for mobilization against the men, they ultimately reject siding with Medea in her internal conflict, instead appealing to her maternal feelings. When the Chorus realize that the murders are inevitable, they sing an ode concluding that it is best for mortals not to have children at all, to spare themselves the pain and disappointment that children can cause (1081–1115). Their words represent the unravelling of their genderbased loyalty to Medea, as their horror at the children's murders lead them not only to condemn Medea's actions but even to reject their commitment to maternity, the ultimate female role, which in Greek society was viewed as the primary goal of a woman's life.

3 Medea as Avenger: The Ending of the Play

Medea has often been described as a "revenge tragedy," and despite the extreme and terrifying nature of Medea's actions, she is motivated by traditional Greek attitudes to revenge. The desire to harm one's enemies was an accepted part of Greek morality, and was often described as the foundation of justice (see Blundell (1989) chapter 2). While Medea horrifyingly

conflates enemies and friends in her vengeance, enacting violence upon those who should be closest to her, her basic desire for vengeance is not exceptional. Yet human vengeance is usually checked by the fear of reciprocity, for one act of violence incurs the likelihood of a reciprocal act of retaliation, a problem demonstrated most clearly by Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, where vengeance becomes an unbreakable cycle. Conversely, the most striking aspect of Medea's vengeance is the impunity with which she acts, for in the final moments of the play we see her elevated above the stage in the dragonchariot, confident in her escape to Athens and facing no retribution for the murders she has committed. This impunity is unusual in tragedy, for while it frequently depicts suffering which is unjust in the sense that it is disproportionate or affects innocents, the principle that one pays for one's actions is normally a pervasive feature of the genre. Even tragic figures who commit dreadful actions in constrained circumstances (such as Agamemnon), or those who act in ignorance (such as Oedipus) incur some kind of reciprocal suffering for their deeds. The character who offers the closest parallel to Medea is Hecuba, who kills the innocent children of Polymestor in vengeance for his murder of her own son: yet while she incurs no human punishment, the play ends with Polymestor prophesying her doom, since she is told she will be transformed into a dog and leap to her death in the sea (Eur. *Hec*. 1259–65). In the case of Medea, the audience have seen her prepare her escape route to Athens, and we are given no indication that she will face any consequences for her actions in Corinth.

Not only does Medea face no consequences for her actions, she does not appear to be traumatized by what she has done, or to regret her decision. While Medea does acknowledge that she too suffers because of the children's deaths, the emphasis is placed on her triumph over Jason and her exultation over his grief. Medea continues to perceive the murders as justified, and regards any sorrow she may experience as a worthwhile cost in her greater aim of achieving vengeance:

> *Jason*:
>
> You too have grief, and you share in these troubles.
>
> *Medea*:
>
> Yes, but know this: the pain is dissolved if you cannot mock me.
> (1362–3)

Medea's selfpossession here is surprising, for we have previously been prepared for the idea that the killing of the children will be a cause of unbearable suffering for her. In her last speech before leaving the stage to commit the murders, Medea describes herself as "wretched woman" (1250), and anticipates the future grief she will have to endure: "Forget the children for this brief day, and mourn later" (1248–9). Thus in presenting Medea in the final scene in a way which suppresses her own suffering and shows her as unrepentant, Euripides confounds the audience's expectations.

Moreover, from the perspective of the Athenian audience, Medea's use of Athens as a place of sanctuary is particularly troubling. Athenian myth includes numerous examples of fallen heroes

from other cities who were taken in and saved by the generosity of Athens. For example, Athens provided salvation for the polluted Orestes and Oedipus, and for the broken Heracles after he had accidentally killed his children (as told in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*, and Euripides' *Heracles*). Athenian kings were portrayed as generous spirited and humane individuals who were prepared to take risks to offer shelter to the weak and helpless: thus Euripides' *Children of Heracles* tells the story of how Athens offered sanctuary to Heracles' persecuted children (see Goslin in this volume), while his *Suppliant Women* (see further McClure in this volume) shows Athens upholding the women of the title in their desire for an honorable burial for their dead sons. Aegeus' offer of sanctuary for Medea evokes this noble tradition of Athenian respect for the weak and helpless, qualities which would have formed an important part of the audience's national selfdefinition. Yet in the case of *Medea*, this generosity is abused, for it is Aegeus' offer which makes it possible for Medea to put her revenge plan into action, as Medea herself comments in the speech where she first reveals her plan to kill the children, "Now there is hope that my enemies will pay the price. For this man has appeared as a harbour for my plans at the point where I was struggling most" (767–9). Not only does Athenian generosity lead to childkilling, it also raises the specter of the unrepetentant infanticide Medea making her home in Athens, a troubling notion for the audience. The Chorus anticipate this dilemma when Medea first reveals her plan, and use it to try to dissuade Medea from the murders:

> How shall this city of holy rivers, or this land of religious processions take you in among their citizens, the childkiller, the impious one?
>
> (846–50)

The Chorus believe that Athens will not accept Medea, and beg her to reconsider her plan, but the audience would probably be aware of the myth that Medea was indeed accepted into Athens, and the ending of the play gives us no reason to doubt that she will be welcomed there. The Chorus' confidence that a glorious city like Athens would not shelter a polluted murderess is therefore naive, and Medea is able to take advantage of Aegeus' good nature and the oaths he swore in ignorance of her true intentions. At the end of the play, Medea herself confidently announces her own future: "As for me, I shall go to the land of Erechtheus, to live with Aegeus, the son of Pandion" (1384–5). Medea presents herself not as a suppliant but as Aegeus' new sexual partner, for the Greek word she uses (*sunoikeô*) commonly means to live together as man and wife. This evokes the further myth of Medea's stay in Athens, that she attempted to kill Aegeus' son Theseus out of jealousy and to protect her own interests as Aegeus' partner. An audience member who knew this myth would therefore see Medea's arrival in Athens as marking a further chapter of trickery and violence, another way in which the ending of the play avoids straightforward resolution.

The ending of *Medea*, then, is perhaps the most troubling of all the surviving tragedies, for it provides little to help the audience make sense of the terrible events they have witnessed. One way in which scholars have tried to make sense of the end of the play is in seeing Medea's elevation to the *mechanê* as a symbol of her dehumanization, as she becomes closer to the gods than to mortal men. In the final scene, Medea's actions and words bear striking resemblances

to those of gods in a traditional *deus ex machina* scene: she issues orders to the mortals onstage (1319), authorizes the creation of a new cult in honor of the dead children (1379–83), and prophesies Jason's own future fate (1386–8), all typical activities of a tragic god. Assimilating Medea's vengeance to divine vengeance helps to illuminate how unusual it is, for while the gods regularly involve innocent bystanders (such as children) in their attempts to punish the wicked, mortals cannot usually go to such lengths, for fear of retribution. It also demonstrates the dehumanizing effects of Medea's actions, since tragic gods are frequently portrayed as being aloof from mortal affairs, and lacking any true sense of compassion. However, Medea's godlike behavior in the final scene should not be regarded as a complete transformation, since her new supernatural powers do not entirely efface the human aspects of her personality. She continues to be drawn into bitter argument with Jason, and her passionate hatred of him is unlike the calm and detached attitudes of Euripidean gods. Whereas human characters have no choice but to accept the edicts of the gods, Jason continues to treat Medea as his wife, and to curse and call down divine justice upon her.

Some scholars have gone further, to argue that we should understand Medea as acting with divine support, and her vengeance to be a fulfilment of the gods' will, in punishing Jason's disregard for his oaths (see for example Kovacs (1993), Burnett (1998) 196–206). Yet while these critics are right to stress the religious sanctity of oaths, and the role of Zeus in upholding them, it is problematic to read a unified divine will behind the action of Medea. We find no indication that the gods are concerned with Jason and Medea's fates. Medea regularly calls upon the gods to witness her position (22–3, 160, 516–19, 764–5, 1352–3), but she ignores the Chorus' advice that Zeus will resolve the matter himself (155–9) and takes vengeance into her own hands. While tragedy regularly presents the gods' will as enacted through the actions of unknowing humans, the tragedian usually shows or alludes to the divine framework which lies behind the human action. Thus, for example, in *Hippolytus* we are told of Aphrodite's will in destroying Hippolytus, even though we then see the human characters make their own choices (see Ebbott's discussion of the play in this volume). In *Medea*, the only divine element in the play is the chariot of the sun given to Medea for her escape, but this can best be explained by Medea's familial relationship to Helios, since it is traditional in Greek literature for gods to support or persecute individual humans for personal reasons, regardless of the broader moral implications of the humans' actions (consider, for example Poseidon's persecution of Odysseus in the *Odyssey*). So while we may condemn Jason's oathbreaking and see Medea's desire to punish him as justified, we should interpret Medea as a selfwilled individual, and not as a personification of an oathdemon.

In the figure of Medea, Euripides has created perhaps his most complex and ambiguous character, a figure who is in many ways attractive yet whose actions are the most repellent in tragedy; a barbarian who espouses Greek ideals; a woman who draws on her femininity to do battle with men, yet whose ultimate vengeance involves the rejection of her most female instincts. There is no simple answer to how we should regard Medea, for the justice of her cause is set in tension with the horror of her actions, and the strength of her arguments with the manipulative and deceitful way she approaches other characters. The ending of the play is particularly troubling, for far from the crushed and distraught woman we might anticipate, we

see an unrepentant and powerful Medea leaving to pursue her murderous agenda elsewhere. Euripides' *Medea* remains a powerful exploration of conflict between genders, and the poisonous consequences of a destructive marriage. Yet much of the play's abiding appeal derives from the enigmatic portrayal of Medea herself, who continues to split opinions and to challenge audiences whenever it is performed.

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FURTHER READING

There is a vast amount of scholarship on *Medea*, and it can be difficult to know where to begin exploring the play. In addition to the works cited above, the following items may be useful starting points.

For an overview of the characterization of Medea, see Boedeker (1997), who explores the alternative versions of Medea which lie behind Euripides' handling of the myth. For understanding the impact of Medea's nonGreek status, VidalNaquet (1997) provides insight into the ways in which Athenian tragedy portrays foreigners. For feminist readings of the play, and discussions of how *Medea* investigates genderconflict and questions the role of women, see Foley (2001) and Williamson (1990), while McClure (1999) and Hopman (2008) explore the relationship between gender, rhetoric, and song. On the infanticide itself and Medea's vengeance, Easterling (1977) is a classic study.

A recent monograph dedicated to *Medea* is Luschnig (2007), which explores the play in great detail and from a variety of angles; another fullscale treatment of the play is McDermott (1989). Mastronarde (2010) is the most recent general study of Euripidean tragedy, and will be of use to the reader interested in understanding *Medea* in its broader contexts.

CHAPTER 7
Children of Heracles

Owen E. Goslin

Like the title characters of the play, *The Children of Heracles* has suffered its own form of literary persecution and exile from the mainstream of Euripidean studies until relatively recently. Over the last two centuries of scholarship the play has been criticized for its episodic structure, its departure from "normal" tragic form, and for a supposedly chauvinistic presentation of Athenian mythical history. Yet it is an exciting play that defies easy categorization, for what begins as a deceptively straightforward suppliant confrontation is quickly complicated by dramatic events, with rapid shifts and reversals in audience sympathies that prevent reading this play as a straightforward celebration of Athenian patriotism. Because paradox is an important element of the play's structure, *Children of Heracles* may well be the most unsettling of Euripidean tragedies, particularly in the final dramatic "twist" that ends the work. It is strange that a play that so strikingly combines the aporetic with the operatic (in its sudden shifts of mood) should have suffered such neglect.

Two particular problems, however, have bedeviled interpretation of *Children of Heracles* and prevented it from gaining a more widespread appreciation. The first concerns the text itself. Although there is little external evidence that the play is incomplete, many scholars have suspected that the apparent inconsistencies and discontinuities are the result of tampering and deletions by later producers.[1] This view found its most influential proponent in Wilamowitz (1882), who believed that several scenes were written by other hands, and proposed that a genuinely Euripidean scene had been cut after line 629, following the death of the Maiden (who is named "Makaria" in the Hypothesis, and in some modern translations, but left unnamed in the text). His judgment, that the play was "mutilated" ("eine Verstümmelung" (1882) 337), persuaded an earlier generation of scholars, including Gilbert Murray, who described the play as "a mutilated but beautiful piece" ((1913) 90). The authority of these early judgments may partly account for the dismal standing in which the play was long held (Allan (2001a) 35). This is unfortunate, since the uncertain textual tradition of other plays—most notably the *Bacchae*—has not prevented wider interest in them. Although later scholars have effectively countered many of Wilamowitz's proposals (see especially Zuntz (1947)), debate about the text continues—particularly concerning the existence of a final lacuna (see section 4). It is important to recognize, however, that the more radical proposals for textual emendation were largely based on certain assumptions about tragic form, and about Euripidean tragedy: such as the organic unity of the text, the necessity for a single tragic hero, or the patriotic intent of the poet. A new appreciation for Euripides' aesthetic of dramatic surprise and paradox, however, and his cultivation of uncertainty and *aporia* in the viewing audience (see most recently Mastronarde (2010) 307–12) can account for some of the discontinuities that were earlier ascribed to textual corruption.

A second longstanding problem regards the political interpretation, and in particular whether

the play celebrates or subverts the dominant Athenian political values of the day (see also Swift Chapter 6 and McClure Chapter 11 in this volume). Earlier scholars assumed that the play was a fairly unproblematic play of patriotism; indeed, some went so far as to suggest that Euripides was constrained by the patriotic atmosphere of the Peloponnesian War years, and that this historical background can explain the play's deficiencies (Murray (1913) 90–92; Spranger (1925); McLean (1934) 213–14; Delebecque (1951) 83; Fitton (1961) 460; Goossens (1962) 190). A more appreciative reading was put forward by Zuntz, who argued that the play presents an idealized Athens, but that the final scene demonstrates the difficulty of living up to this political ideal ((1955) 42). These readings, however, underplay the significance of the final scene, in which the Athenian Chorus acquiesces to Alcmene's murder of Eurystheus, despite an Athenian decree prohibiting the murder of prisoners of war (Burian (1977) 16). Recent studies by Mendelsohn (2002) and Roselli (2007), on the other hand, have offered close readings that demonstrate how Euripides places Athenian ideologies of gender and political participation to the test.

In this chapter I will suggest some of the ways in which *Children of Heracles* transforms a wellknown story of Athenian patriotic defense of the weak into an exciting and troubling play that dramatizes the uneasy relationship between power and political idealism. As I have already outlined, the final scene, and the significance of Alcmene's revenge, is at the center of many of the traditional problems of the play. In what follows, therefore, I will show how the play carefully prepares for and produces a final scene of great complexity that unsettles the more positive depiction of Athens earlier in the play (see also Falkner (1989) 114). The apparent discontinuities and paradoxical form of *Children of Heracles* not only produce great dramatic excitement and suspense, but are also closely connected to Euripides' exploration of the slippage between an idealized political language and the exercise of power. Just as the characters—and the audience, too—come to see one interpretation of events as authoritative, Euripides complicates or reverses the basis for this interpretation. What makes Euripides' drama so challenging, therefore, is the way in which the play refuses to endorse an essentially static view of the characters involved, but instead focuses on the transformative effect of power on those who acquire it.

1 The Legend of the Heraclidae and Athenian Patriotism

Because the myth of the Heraclidae occupied an important part in Athens' selfconception of its past and in its more overt propaganda, many critics have assumed that the play itself performs a patriotic function. The legend was frequently cited in the funeral orations that were delivered annually in Athens to mark the burial of the war dead, and which were important statements of Athenian selfidentity and idealization (on the funeral oration and its ideological function in the city see Loraux (1986), who dates the development of the genre to the 460 s). The Attic orators Lysias (2.11–16), Isocrates (4.56, 12.194) and Demosthenes (60.8), as well as Plato in his *Menexenus* (239b), all include the legend as part of a catalogue of heroic deeds performed by the Athenian *polis* on behalf of others. One function of this catalogue was to justify past Athenian wars by presenting them as essentially defensive affairs, which were

waged against unjust enemies on behalf of those who had been wronged. While these speeches postdate our play, it is likely that the legend of the Heraclidae was a feature of Athenian propaganda much earlier than this (Galeotti Papi (1995) 150, Mills (1997) 46): already in Herodotus (9.27) the Athenians, just before the Battle of Plataea, recall the legend in order to boost their prestige in the eyes of their fellow Greeks.

Since other accounts locate the Heraclids' supplication in Athens, the setting of the play in Marathon seems to be a Euripidean innovation, and one that was calculated to deepen the political resonance of the play. According to one tradition, Heracles was first worshipped as a god in Marathon (Pausanias 1.15.4), and the area included an important cult center to him (Wilkins (1993) xxvii). But Marathon is also evocative as the site of the Athenian victory over the Persians in 490 BCE, in what were remembered by the time of our play as "freedom wars" (Raaflaub (2004) 59–65). "Freedom" (*eleutheria*) is indeed a key word of the play, occurring more often in this play than in any other extant tragedy; as we will see, it is an important concern of both Demophon and Alcmene, and the struggle to free the suppliant Heraclids from their Argive persecutors drives the narrative of the play and gives it its structure. As with the legend of the Heraclids, later Athenians exploited the victory at Marathon as part of their official propaganda, alluding to it in order to justify their rule over other Greeks. Thus Isocrates, in his catalogue of past Athenian deeds in the *Panathenaicus*, immediately follows the exemplum of the Heraclidae (12.194) by recalling the Athenian victory at Marathon (12.195). As Allan suggests ((2001a) 48), "by making the Chorus old men of Marathon . . . Euripides connects two of the most glorious episodes in Athens' past, the defence of the Heraclidae and the battle of Marathon."

Although the *Children of Heracles* treads the same mythological ground as the panegyrics of the Attic orators, is it necessarily the case that this tradition restricts Euripides' depiction of Athens (Zuntz (1955) 26), or that the suppliant drama and oratory "constitute variations of the same ideological position" with regard to Athens' use of power on behalf of others (Tzanetou (2005) 118)? This is a question that has preoccupied critics, since the specter of propaganda has prevented full appreciation of the play. Close attention to its paradoxical structure, however, will show how Euripides upends or complicates the more straightforward presentation of Athenian motives found in the funeral orations and other political rhetoric. The play's delight in the paradoxes and dilemmas of power makes it difficult to read the *Children of Heracles* as a mystification of Athenian imperial interests; rather, the play brings out into the open contradictions that the orators, for instance, would prefer to smooth over.

A brief summary of Lysias' account (2.11–16), written in the early fourth century BCE, will show more clearly where Euripides has chosen to create complications in his retelling of the Heraclid legend. Lysias provides the fullest account of the legend among the Attic orators, but it is probably typical in presenting Athenian actions as an ethical choice that involved the right evaluation of justice, and the right emotional disposition towards the suffering suppliants and their persecutors. Thus Lysias describes how the Athenians "thought it right to fight on behalf of the weaker side with justice, rather than to give favor to the powerful" who did wrong (2.12). He continues:

> although no profit (*kerdos*) was at hand except good repute, [the Athenians] took up so great a risk on their [i.e. the Heraclids'] behalf, pitying those who were being wronged and hating those who were acting out of hubris, endeavoring to hinder the latter and thinking it right to aid the former, since they considered it to be an indication of freedom to do nothing against their own will, of justice to aid the wronged, and of courage to die fighting on behalf of both of these ideals, if it was necessary.
>
> (2.14)

Through their devotion to justice and freedom, and through their emotional forthrightness, the Athenians are able to free the suppliant Heraclids from fear (2.15). Thus, Lysias concludes, Athens was able to accomplish what even Heracles could not: "for on the very same day the children saw their own salvation, and the vengeful punishment (*timôrian*) of their enemies" (2.16). As we will see, although the *Children of Heracles* similarly ends with the freedom of the suppliants and the enactment of revenge, Euripides complicates the neat binaries delineated by Lysias. Furthermore, while "vengeance" (*timôria*) is the word that triumphantly caps Lysias' account, Euripides' play sows plenty of doubt about the justice of Alcmene's revenge. The young suppliant boys, who remain silently seated at the altar throughout the play, provide an arresting visual counterpoint to all of these reversals, as they transform from objects of the Chorus' pity at the beginning of the play (232), into objects of their future enmity, as the ancestors of Athens' future Spartan foes (1034–37).

2 Supplication and Athenian Idealism

In the first third of the play Euripides accentuates the great disparity in power between the suppliants and the Argives, through the spectacle of the mute children who huddle about Iolaus like defenseless chicks (10), and the abusiveness of the Herald towards them. Moreover, Euripides innovatively depicts Iolaus as an old man, whereas in the earlier mythological tradition he is the younger helper and nephew of Heracles. The resulting conflict between suppliant and persecutor is one in which the Argive abuse of power, and the innocence of the Heraclids, is starkly presented. This framework is established from the very beginning, for we learn in Iolaus' prologue that the Argives have been effective in the past at leveraging their power against other states in order to deprive the suppliants of refuge: "for when they perceive our weakness and these small and fatherless children, they respect those who are powerful and drive us from their land" (23–5). The Herald's actions and speech do much to confirm Iolaus' interpretation of the Argives' violence: from his first appearance, the Herald makes clear that he regards the suppliants as little more than Eurystheus' property (67–8), and no different than runaway slaves (140). The violence of his rhetoric is matched by his actions: when the Athenian Chorus arrive in response to Iolaus' cries for help, they find him sprawled on the ground (76), where he has been thrown by the Herald (128–29). Demophon is shocked by this violence, and remarks that while the Herald dresses like a Greek, his actions are barbaric (130–31)—words which have special resonance for the site of Marathon. In bringing out the violent, hubristic (18), and barbaric, character of this adversary, Euripides assimilates the Herald (and by extension Eurystheus) to the Persians, whose defeat at Marathon ensured

Athenian freedom from tyranny.

This early confrontation is important for our response to the speeches in the *agōn*, since the Herald's prosecutorial speech (134–78) comes across as especially crude in its argument. For the Herald, Eurystheus' claim on the lives of the suppliants is selfevident and in need of little argument: it is within the right (*dikaioi*, 142) of those who govern Argos to bring judgment against their own people without interference (142–43). The Herald never raises the issue of the suppliants' innocence or culpability; rather, the *fact* of their condemnation in Argos is deemed sufficient. The Herald uses a second rhetorical strategy, however, that he believes will be most persuasive to the Athenians: the threat of force, and the promise of profit (*kerdos*). Since no city has yet dared to create trouble for themselves by crossing Argos (144–46), he reasons, the suppliants must believe that the Athenians are uniquely foolish enough to take that risk (147–9), and to feel pity at their misfortunes (152). Instead, he asks the Athenians to look towards their own profit and an alliance with a powerful state like Argos (156–57), rather than with a group of helpless suppliants. In a dig at the Athenians' supposed unity, the Herald warns of the resentment that Demophon may incur from his own people, when casualties lead them to reflect on the uselessness of the war, fought on behalf of an old man, "a tomb, and mere nothing" (165–67). Thus the Herald frames the choice as one of safety and profit, rather than justice, in which the narrow political consequences of defending the suppliants are paramount.

While the Herald frames the debate in terms of power and selfinterest, Iolaus emphasizes a different set of considerations, in which the injustice of the suppliants' suffering—and Athenian obligations to prevent it—are of utmost importance (181–231). Iolaus first counters the Herald's claim of legal jurisdiction over the suppliants with a strong argument: as exiles, they no longer have any relationship with Argos, and thus cannot be subject to their decrees (184–90). Instead, Iolaus offers several reasons why Athens ought to end their suffering. First, as Iolaus reminds Demophon, the families of Theseus and Heracles share a common ancestor in Pelops, and thus Athens has a familial obligation to act (205–213). Secondly, Iolaus recalls the past favors that Heracles performed for Theseus, thus creating a hereditary obligation (*charis*) that ought to be paid back, now that the Heraclids are in need (214–222). But perhaps most rhetorically effective is the way that Iolaus emphasizes Athens' exceptional dedication to fairness, justice, and freedom. Iolaus alludes to this at the beginning of his speech, when he celebrates the Athenian right to speak without fear, unlike the previous cities where the suppliants sought refuge (181–83). Emboldened by this protection of free speech, Iolaus then proceeds to stand the arguments made by the Herald on their head: Athens differs from other cities precisely in its unwillingness to be swayed by Argive power, since it remains unafraid (191) and is motivated by an innate concern for freedom. Earlier in the play Iolaus had claimed that "the altar of the god and the free land of Athens" would be sufficient to protect them from Argos (61–2). Now Iolaus presents the Argive attack on the suppliants as a challenge to Athenian freedom: "if . . . [the Athenians] judge in favor of your arguments, then I do not recognize Athens as free any longer" (197–98). Thus Athens must consider the shame that would result from trading freedom from outside interference in exchange for political advantage.

It is this last argument that affects Demophon the most, and caps the three reasons that he offers

for accepting the suppliant request (236–52): (1) the sanctity of Zeus' altar, (2) their mutual kinship and inherited obligation (*charis*), and (3) the avoidance of shame (*aischros*). Demophon expands this last reason, claiming "if I will permit this altar to be desecrated by violent force (*bia*), I will not be seen to inhabit a free land, but to have betrayed the suppliants out of fear of the Argives" (243–46). Euripides emphasizes how closely the suppliant request has been assimilated to Athens' selfidealization, for unlike Theseus in Euripides' *Suppliant Women* (349–53) or Pelasgus in Aeschylus' *Suppliants* (397–401), Demophon arrives at his decision without seeking the consent of the city through a vote in the assembly (Burian (1977) 6). The Chorus' sympathetic reaction shows that they approve of Demophon's decision, at the same time that they supplement his stated reasons with the injustice suffered by the suppliants; unlike Demophon, who neglects to raise the issue of justice and suffering, the Chorus plainly state their pity for the suppliants because of their undeserved misfortune (232–35). The Chorus celebrate Demophon's decision, which confirms the image of Athens as a city that is always (*aei*) willing to act with justice in order to aid the weak (329–32)—a positive interpretation of what the Herald had earlier warned was the Athenians' characteristic weakness: that the city always "takes the worse people as its friends, even though it is possible to choose the better" (177–78).

As we will see, the opening scene develops neat distinctions between the motives of the characters that will later come into question. Euripides brings the differences between Athens and Argos into their sharpest relief here, in ways that appear to coincide with the account of Lysias. The Herald's worldview, in which advantage and expediency are the basis for political decisionmaking, is depicted as antithetical to the Athenian concern with honor. Thus, in a moment that will have great significance for the end of the play, Demophon refuses to agree to the Herald's clever compromise, in which the Athenians would send the suppliants outside of their borders, thus allowing the Argives to drag them away by force, "surely this would be shameful for me, but of no harm to you" the Herald claims (255). But it would indeed be unjust and shameful, Demophon argues, since asylum at the god's altar is a common refuge to all (260). Thus the supplication crisis that begins the play expands beyond the immediate issue, and calls into question Athens' freedom to act on behalf of its moral ideals. Demophon's last words to the Herald express this very concern (285–87): "you were not about to bring shame on me by leading these children away by force—for this city I rule is not subject to Argos, but free."

3 Political Paralysis and Transformation

After Athens emerges as the only state with sufficient power and moral sense to defend the suppliants, Euripides picks this narrative apart over the last twothirds of the play. While the defense of the suppliants at first coincides with the Athenian resolve to defend their sovereignty from foreign encroachment, these two aims are soon placed in conflict. Demophon returns from his consultation of the oracles to inform Iolaus of an unexpected prophecy: the enemy's defeat and the salvation of the city can be guaranteed only if a virgin (*parthenos*) of noble blood is sacrificed to Persephone (407–10). While the prophecy intrudes uncomfortably

in the narrative—no motive for the sacrifice is given—the shock of this announcement immediately reveals the political assumptions of the play's opening. The divine complication exposes the slippage between the earlier rhetoric of political freedom, and the reality of exercising power. Although both the Chorus (425) and Iolaus (437) attribute the impasse to the gods, or to the workings of fate (449–50), it is really a political problem, since Demophon is unwilling to sacrifice either his own daughter or that of another Athenian (410–13). The Herald's warning about internal dissent, which was so easily rejected, now appears prescient. Civil war becomes a real possibility, Demophon fears, since the Athenians will be divided between those who support the suppliants, and those who resent the sacrifice required on their behalf (415–19).

Demophon's reluctance to commit the sacrifice is not the result of personal cowardice (*pace* Vellacott (1975) 187); rather, the prophecy reveals a paradox in the Athenian position that immobilizes them. Demophon would need to rule his people by force, like a barbarian tyrant (423), to accomplish the sacrifice; yet it is precisely Athens' devotion to freedom and antipathy to tyranny that lead the suppliants to them in the first place. Understandably, as Iolaus himself realizes (435–7), Demophon is unwilling to act in such a tyrannical manner. A second paradox arises in the reversal of the previously hierarchical relationship between suppliant and supplicated, for now the salvation of Athens itself is at stake (420–22) and placed in the hands of the suppliants. Both Demophon and the Chorus fear the shame they will incur if they betray the suppliants (461–3), but only the Heraclids themselves can resolve this situation, through an act of sacrifice or by ending their supplication. The paralysis, however, extends to the Heraclids as well. Even Iolaus' offer to surrender himself in place of the children (455) proves ineffectual, for, as Demophon observes, only the children are of interest to Eurystheus (466–67). The repetition of "helplessness" (464, 472) in Demophon's words emphasizes the impotence of both leaders in the face of the god's prophecy.

After creating this deadend, Euripides devises two surprising reversals that return the plot on its course towards salvation and freedom: a Heraclid Maiden unexpectedly appears from inside the temple and willingly offers herself as a sacrifice, thus resolving the impasse. Then the frail Iolaus, inspired by the Maiden's example, takes up arms and is rejuvenated on the battlefield through divine intervention, capturing Eurystheus. Both scenes are marked by sudden shifts in tone from the preceding action—from the sweeping optimism of the Maiden, to the comic arming of the geriatric Iolaus—and have therefore contributed to the perception that the play is episodic and loosely structured. One function of these scenes, however, is to exaggerate the reversal at the end of the play, and to increase our sense of *aporia* at Alcmene's revenge. The transformations that take place in this middle section, while they resolve the immediate dramatic impasse, are shown to have unintended consequences by the end of the play.

The Maiden's sudden entrance and disappearance from the play—there is no reference to her at all after her final exit—has perplexed many critics.[2] Are we to understand her willingness to die, which will bring glory to her, and salvation to her brothers (532) and Athens (503–6), as wholly admirable? Does it continue the idealization seen in the opening of the play, now extended from the city to the suppliants themselves (Burian (1977) 10)? Or should we read this

scene ironically, in which the death of a young innocent exposes the terrible cost of war (Vellacott (1975) 190–92)? The latter interpretation requires some overreading and unnecessary speculation about Euripides' true political views, since there is little in the Maiden's words, or in the reactions of those on stage, that would suggest an ironic interpretation. Moreover, as several studies have shown, the Maiden's argument for self sacrifice echoes the rhetoric of the Athenian funeral oration (Galeotti Papi (1995); Roselli (2007)), which might suggest the admirable nature of her death. This is evident particularly in the way that she presents her death as a willing "choice" to die on behalf of others, thus securing for herself a glorious end that confirms her innate nobility (530–34). Nevertheless, Euripides draws our attention to some details that, as the drama proceeds, complicate this interpretation of the Maiden's sacrifice. At the same time as her decision draws both the Athenians and Heraclids closer together, the Maiden's reasons for offering herself as a sacrifice cannot be easily assimilated to Athens' selfidealization. Although her sacrifice will benefit Athens, she repeatedly emphasizes the salvation she will bring her family (481, 532, 590), an act that will confirm her nobility as a child of Heracles (cf. 540–41). Her assertiveness on behalf of the *genos* ("familyline") is transgressive, since it leads her to speak publicly before men, which she notes is inconsistent with gender norms (474–77), and to refuse Iolaus' suggestion that it would be more "just" if the sacrificial victim were chosen "by lot" (543–46)—an implicit rejection of the distinctly Athenian democratic practice in which offices were selected by lot. While the interests of the *genos* and the *polis* coincide in the Maiden's sacrifice, and her transgression brings about the eventual freedom of the suppliants, her assertive nature is a deeply ambivalent force—as the similarly selfwilled Alcmene will show. The absence of any explicit mention of the Maiden's death or her future cult is therefore in keeping with the tone of the scene, and the outcome of the play: Euripides deprives us of the closure that lamentation and funeral cult would offer, and instead allows our interpretation of the sacrifice to be colored by the events that follow it.

The following scene, in which Iolaus volunteers to fight on the battlefield despite the skepticism of his servant and Alcmene, illustrates the transformative effect of the Maiden's sacrifice on the other characters. Like the previous scene, however, Euripides complicates our judgment of Iolaus' decision. For although his willingness to fight and to take an active role in the suppliants' own defense is admirable, Euripides undercuts this heroism by drawing attention to Iolaus' frailty with particularly comic effect. A few readers have questioned in what sense this scene is comic (Wilkins (1993) 137–38, 142), but the Servant's sarcasm is reminiscent of the reversal of master–slave roles in Old Comedy (e.g. Aristophanes' *Frogs*). When, for instance, Iolaus defends his physical and military capability in the face of skepticism, the Servant taunts "You might strike [your enemy], but first you would fall over" (686). Iolaus' exit towards the battlefield would seem to confirm the comedy, since the Servant must carry the old man's armor, which is too heavy for his master (723–25); as the Servant slyly comments about this situation (729), "do I really need to lead this 'hoplite' as if he were a little boy (*paidagôgein*)?"

While some have maintained that the comedy here is intended primarily for its entertainment and is without significance for the play (Conacher (1967) 117; Seidensticker (1982) 100), the

scene prepares for the striking reversal of power to come. We are left wondering, like the Servant as he leads Iolaus to battle, whether the old man really has the strength to face his enemies or is merely imagining his power (733–35). Thus the comedy seems to confirm our earlier impression of Iolaus, who was previously described as a living "tomb" (167); this, however, makes his later rejuvenation all the more unexpected and "wondrous" (797, 853). Both scenes—the Maiden's willing sacrifice and Iolaus' comic arming—also signal the shifting relationship between Athens and the suppliants, which is reinforced by the sudden arrival of the Heraclid Hyllus and his forces (639ff.): the suppliants will now play a leading role in winning their freedom and preserving Athenian autonomy, at the same time as the Athenians recede into the background of the action. By drawing attention to the Maiden's self willed defense of the *genos* and the comic nature of Iolaus' heroism, however, Euripides suspends our judgment about the nature of this transformation. Iolaus' miraculous rejuvenation on the battlefield (853–63) demonstrates the deceptiveness of appearances, and leads to the first of several reevaluations that the audience will be forced to consider in the final section of the play.

4 Reversals of Power

On the arrival of the messenger, however, Euripides deftly misdirects his audience through the promise of a triumphant ending. The capture of Eurystheus appears to bring the suppliant action to a successful conclusion, and to restore the exiles to their former status. Thus Heracles' epiphany on the battlefield (853–57) confirms the Heraclids' divine favor, and erases Alcmene's earlier doubts about her son's divinity (869–72). The Chorus, meanwhile, greets the news of the Athenian victory with a choral strophe that echoes the rhetoric of the funeral orations: just as Athena aided Heracles, so Athens saved his children, and "checked the hubris of Eurystheus, for whom violent anger replaced justice" (924–27). Similarly, Alcmene celebrates the freedom of her children (873–74), who are now able to take possession again of their lands, and the freedom of the Athenian people that made victory possible (957–58). But this triumph is soon undercut by Alcmene's actions, for what Lysias' funeral oration treats as the culminating element of the Heraclid legend—the revenge (*timôria*)—is here transformed into a troubling use of power.

Our earlier assumptions about Alcmene's helplessness (cf. 709–19) are upended when Eurystheus is brought before her. Euripides' deviation from other accounts of Eurystheus' death signals the way he has chosen to complicate the final act of vengeance: elsewhere Eurystheus is killed by Iolaus (e.g. Pindar *Pythian* 9.78–83), the Heraclids (Thucydides 1.9), or Hyllus (Apollodorus 2.8.1), while Euripides is the only source to mention either his capture on the battlefield or Alcmene's responsibility for his death (Wilkins (1993) xvii–xviii). Thus Euripides shifts the focus of the drama to the reversal of power between the two foes, and to the ethical problem of killing a prisoner of war. Alcmene's revenge has elicited a range of critical responses, however. The majority emphasize Alcmene's abhorrent and inhumane treatment of Eurystheus, through which she shows herself to be "an expression of pure hatred and revenge" (Falkner (1989) 122; Zuntz (1955) 37), while a few have argued that the play

presents Alcmene's revenge as an unproblematic act of justice (Burnett (1998) 153–57). This latter interpretation is less convincing, given Eurystheus' unexpectedly robust defense of his actions (983–1017), and the Athenian law prohibiting the murder of captives (961–66). But neither does Euripides depict Alcmene as a vengeful monster. Instead the dramatic success of this scene rests in the very human emotions and rationality expressed by both Alcmene and Eurystheus. Although the play makes it difficult to approve either Alcmene's violation of Athenian law or Eurystheus' earlier persecution of the suppliants, the reasons for both courses of action are made intelligible and recognizably human.

The play, then, eschews the comfortable divisions between just and unjust parties that are the hallmark of the funeral oration. Instead Euripides destabilizes an essentialist understanding of human character, while our attention is directed to the underlying reversal in power, and the effect that this has on the characters. Although Eurystheus refuses to beg or supplicate his captors (1026), Alcmene's confrontation with her former persecutor unmistakably echoes the supplication that opened the play. This mirroring effect emphasizes the reversal between the roles of persecutor and victim; but it also highlights the differences between Alcmene and the Athenians in their handling of power. While the Athenians felt constrained by honor and shame to use their resources to defend the suppliants, Alcmene delights in the special pleasure that only a victim can feel in taunting a former oppressor. The reason for Iolaus' capture of Eurystheus is the pleasure that Alcmene will take in seeing him "mastered" (884). As the servant explains as he leads Eurystheus on stage, Hyllus and Iolaus wished "to delight you, for it's most pleasurable to see one's enemy brought down from good fortune to bad" (939–40). Alcmene seizes this opportunity with relish, and assumes the role of an agent of justice: "Has Justice seized you at long last? Then first turn your head this way and dare to look upon your enemy face to face—for now at any rate you are ruled and rule no longer" (941–44).

As a victim, Alcmene's hatred (941) and visceral delight in Eurystheus' suffering are to be expected; as the Chorus says in response to her desire to kill Eurystheus, "your quarrel with this man is something terrible (*deinon*) and yet understandable" (981–82). But Alcmene's newly acquired power permits her to act in ways that subvert Athenian laws, and which mimic the previous behavior of the Argives. Iolaus' earlier description of Eurystheus takes on new meaning, now that the balance of power has been reversed:

> Eurystheus would like to humiliate (*kathubrisai*) an ally of Herakles, since he's a wicked man. But wise men should pray to have a wise man for an enemy . . . for one might then obtain much respect and justice.
>
> (456–60)

After his capture, however, Eurystheus is forced (885) to receive from Alcmene the same humiliation, now cloaked in the name of justice. Our unease at this reversal is deepened when Alcmene reveals her intention to kill Eurystheus, for the servant is forced to contradict her and reveal the Athenian law that prevents his death (961–66; my reading of 961–74 follows the distribution of parts as printed in Diggle's Oxford Classical Text.). As Allan notes, that Alcmene is now in open disagreement with one of her own Heraclids suggests the problematic nature of the vengeance to come, and makes us more receptive to Eurystheus' defense ((2001a)

209). Her desire to see Eurystheus punished, despite the Athenian law, is well captured in her response to the servant's protestation that there is no one who would be willing to kill Eurystheus: "*I* would—and I say that I too am someone" (973). In her volunteerism, assertive behavior, and willingness to transgress proper gender expectations (978–80), Alcmene resembles no one so much as the Maiden—a parallel that now places that earlier sacrifice in an ambivalent light. Whereas the Maiden's selfassertiveness in defense of the *genos* and *polis* was held up for praise, Alcmene's similar act now places the two institutions in open conflict, and suggests the dangers of female transgression (Mendelsohn (2002) 121–26).

At the same time as our previous judgments about Alcmene are shaken, Euripides reverses our expectations about Eurystheus, through his forceful and rationally argued defense (983–1017). Despite the messenger's rebuke of his cowardice on the battlefield (813–17), Eurystheus now bravely faces death and appears eager to avoid the charge of cowardice (983–85; 1026). He was, he claims, merely an unwilling tool in Hera's persecution of Heracles (990); and yet, as a result of that enmity, how could he allow the Heraclids to grow to maturity and act on their hatred? Thus it was rational to pursue a course of security, as any other in his position would (1004). While Eurystheus addresses himself to Alcmene, it is also an obliquely worded appeal to the Athenians, in which he emphasizes the city's restraint (*sôphronousa*, 1012) in sparing his life. Through their willingness to place personal enmity aside in deference to the gods (1012–13), Athens has shown that it is fundamentally different from Alcmene, who delights in the power to punish her enemy. This sets up a more complex final decision, since the issue of Eurystheus' punishment extends beyond the personal feud with Alcmene and now implicates the Athenians' selfidealization.

It comes as a shock, then, that the Athenian Chorus is at first won over by Eurystheus' words and urges Alcmene to release the prisoner (1018–19)—only to reverse course immediately, when Alcmene speciously argues that by killing Eurystheus and returning his body to the city she will preserve the law concerning prisoners. Her compromise is strikingly reminiscent of the earlier proposal suggested by the Herald, in which the Athenians would have surrendered the suppliants while keeping their hands clean from the taint of sacrilege (253–60); the contrast between Demophon's strong rejection of this proposal and the Chorus' present weakness is therefore striking. The Chorus' diffidence here has led several critics to suggest a lacuna after line 1052 (Wilkins (1993) 913). Why, for instance, does the Chorus respond to Alcmene's outrageous final words, in which she orders her servants to kill Eurystheus and "to give him to the dogs" (1050–52), with the bland "this seems right to me" (1053)? Wilkins argues that in the proposed lacuna the Chorus must have made clear provisions for Eurystheus' burial, and perhaps also referred to the future cult of Makaria. Others have proposed emending *kusin* ("dogs") in order to remove the perceived contradiction with the earlier promise of burial, which would eliminate the suggested lacuna (Kovacs (1996) 16–27, (2003b) 158–62). But these are solutions in search of a problem, while the current text produces an ending that is calculated to overturn a onedimensional reading of the final action. The vacillation of the Chorus results from two conflicting desires that are resolved through Alcmene's sophistry: the desire to see Eurystheus punished and to maintain the authority of the city's laws. Our unease at this aboutface is important, since it suggests the incompatibility of these desires—if only as a

matter of ethics, rather than at the level of the plot. Furthermore, by refusing the closing gesture of a cult *aetion*, Euripides leaves the audience with the impressive shock of the revenge. Alcmene's order to throw Eurystheus to the dogs is not incompatible with the promise to return his body (Allan (2001a) 220–22), but accentuates the terrible cost of the Athenians' compromise. Through his death the Athenians will gain the "profit" (*kerdos*, 1043) of his hero cult, but only at the expense of undermining the sovereignty of their laws. The Athenians' defense of the suppliants has paradoxically brought about the very "profit" that they had earlier rejected as a reason for political action (cf. 153–54). Our received text boldly captures this paradox, and is consistent with the reversals that mark the last twothirds of the play.

The ending is not a wholesale subversion of Athenian values, since the political ideals of freedom and justice remain important aspirations to the very end of the play. But through its paradoxical structure *Children of Heracles* demonstrates the susceptibility of these ideals to relationships of power. As these relationships change over the course of the play, so do our judgments about the characters, and about the political goals expressed at the beginning of the play. The Athenian complicity in the final revenge is therefore not so much a negation of the earlier idealization, but a recognition that the *polis*—like Alcmene and Eurystheus—is liable to use its power in ways that conflict with its political ideals. By concluding the play with the suggestion of Athenian vulnerability, Euripides complicates the more schematic presentation of the Heraclid myth found in Athenian political rhetoric, and transforms this suppliant myth into a compelling exploration of power. Perhaps for this reason the play seems to have found popularity in places outside of Athens, most notably in the fourthcentury citystates of Magna Graecia (Allan (2001b); Taplin (2007) 126–30). Presumably these audiences were less invested in patriotic or subversive readings of Athenian motives in the play, and more interested in the underlying dynamics of justice, revenge, and power that the play dramatizes. It is a play that certainly deserves to be read and performed today.

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FURTHER READING

The standard Greek edition of the play is Diggle's Oxford Classical Text (1984). Currently the most uptodate commentaries are Wilkins (1993), which focuses especially on textual problems and is intended for an audience that can read Greek; and Allan (2001a), which, with its translations into English, is more accessible to the Greekless reader. Although it is primarily a literary commentary, Allan (2001a) also contains many cogent arguments in defense of the textual integrity of the play (and in matters of the text is therefore a bit more conservative than Wilkins). Other important studies on the text include: Wilamowitz (1882) and Lesky (1977), both of whom argue in favor of significant gaps in our text; responses to these arguments can be found in Zuntz (1947) and Cropp (1980); see also Kovacs (1996) and (2003b), the more recent of which provides a response to the readings in Allan (2001a). Important interpretations that have treated the play as a structurally coherent and dramatically successful whole include Zuntz (1955), Burnett (1976) and Burian (1977), although they offer opposed readings of the final revenge. More recent scholarship has focused on the death of the Maiden, and the relationship between gender and politics in the play, see further Rabinowitz (1993) 62–64; Galeotti Papi (1995); Mendelsohn (2002); and Roselli (2007). On the play's depiction of supplication and its relationship to Athens' hegemonic selfimage see Grethlein (2003) and Tzanetou (2012).

NOTES

1 Four alleged quotations from *Children of Heracles* are found in the work of the fifthcentury BCE anthologists Stobaeus and Orrion, and a fifth in a scholia to Aristophanes; since none of these fragments correspond to our received text, it is possible that these ancient writers had access to a *different* version of the play than we currently possess. Nevertheless, Zuntz ((1947) 46–48) and Allan ((2001a) 225–27) have produced strong arguments that cast doubt on the reliability of these ascriptions, although Wilkins ((1993) 194) remains open to the possibility that "one or two *could* belong to the lost lines at the end of the play."

2 The summary of the play provided by the ancient Hypothesis has only added to the confusion. According to this summary, after the Maiden (named Makaria in the Hypothesis) willingly faced death, "they therefore honored her for her noble death." This brief comment led Wilamowitz and others (Lesky (1977)) to propose a missing scene, in which the Maiden's death was lamented by the Chorus. Although this conjecture places much weight on the nature of the "honor" given to Makaria, it is possible that the Hypothesis is merely careless in its summary (e.g. it refers to the setting as Athens rather than Marathon; O'Connor Visser (1987) 36–37). But even if we accept the Hypothesis' summary, there is no need to posit a textual lacuna in which Makaria received "honor" in the form of lamentation or cult; since Iolaus, Demophon and the Chorus praise the Maiden effusively before her exit, she has already received appropriate honor and there is no discrepancy with the Hypothesis (Allan (2001a) 180).

CHAPTER 8
Hippolytus

Mary Ebbott

How does it happen that someone's life is ruined? At the beginning of her speech to the Chorus in which she reveals her struggles to overcome her powerful sexual feelings for her stepson Hippolytus, Phaedra says that even before her current plight, she wondered about this very question:

Already under other circumstances late into the night

I pondered how people's lives are ruined.

It seems to me that it is not from the nature of their judgment

that they fare so badly, for many have good sense.

But we have to acknowledge this:

we know and recognize what is right,

but we fail to accomplish it . . .

(375–381)

Phaedra at the moment she says these words is striving to do the right thing. Hippolytus and Theseus will also endeavor to do what each thinks is right. All three come to a ruinous end. Euripides' *Hippolytus* is a drama in which the caprice of the gods in exercising their power over mortals' lives is on full display. Yet the drama hinges on human emotions and passions and how these emotions can lead to destructive actions, especially when we misunderstand one another. Nevertheless, a human connection through emotions, through pity, sympathy, and even love, is the grace note at the end.

The story of Hippolytus, the "raw material" Euripides had to work with, is loaded with dramatic potential. Phaedra, the wife of the primary Athenian hero Theseus, falls in love with Hippolytus, her husband's son from an earlier affair with an Amazon. When Hippolytus, who considers himself pure and is a devoted follower of the chaste goddess Artemis, discovers his stepmother's feelings, he not only rejects her, but does so with scorn and cruelty. Phaedra, both stung by his viciousness and afraid of discovery by her husband, accuses Hippolytus of raping her and commits suicide. When Theseus learns of her accusation, he condemns Hippolytus to exile and calls on his divine father Poseidon to kill Hippolytus, using a curse Poseidon is guaranteed to fulfill. Theseus then discovers the truth of the matter, but too late to save his son. Having lost both his wife and his son, Theseus is left to live on with his grief. What I find remarkable about the *Hippolytus* is that for all the distance of time and culture between us and the original performance of this play, there is an immediacy both to the emotions portrayed within the play and to those provoked in us. Each person in the play is recognizable as a

feeling human being, not necessarily like you and me, but not remote or simply a "type," either. Euripides was criticized, or at least mocked, during his lifetime for his more "ordinary" portrayal of heroes and mythic persons, but such a portrayal allows us to connect with his tragedies through emotion, and not simply through intellectual analysis.

A story pattern involving the attempted seduction of a young man by a married older woman who then brings a false accusation against him when he rejects her advances is commonly called that of "Potiphar's wife" from a similar sequence of events happening to the biblical Joseph (*Genesis* 39; see also Scodel and Gibert in this volume). The particularly Athenian characters, places, and mythical backstory here, however, have special significance for the Athenian audience, and the story of Hippolytus seems to have been well known among the ancient Greeks (Barrett (1964) 1; 6–15). The family dynamics in this version—that is, the attempted seduction by a stepmother in particular and the sentence of exile and death of the young man imposed by his own father—add to our sense of horror as much as they did for the ancient audience. It is an outlandish situation, but these are not outlandish people: what do decent people do when they find themselves in these circumstances? For a dramatist who is interested in the psychology of the human beings caught in such a situation—that is, the very kind of dramatist Euripides is considered to be—there are many possibilities to explore. How does Phaedra react to her own feelings? Does she decide to act on them and share them with Hippolytus? How can Hippolytus convince his father that the accusation of rape is a false one? How will Theseus contend with his wife's suicide, the rape accusation against his own son, and, finally, his realization of the truth? Through the play's attention to emotional flashpoints and misunderstandings, Euripides has transformed the basic story into a tragedy that is seen and felt on all sides of the human triangle.

1 Second Attempts and Second Thoughts

Greek myth was variable and tragedians could choose which aspects of these traditional stories they wanted to emphasize. Sophocles also produced a now lost play called *Phaedra*, which portrayed his own take on the same story, and we have evidence that Euripides chose to dramatize this story twice in his career. The manuscripts that transmit the texts of Athenian tragedies contain what are known as "hypotheses" of the plays, short summaries attributed to the period of Alexandrian scholarship in the third and second centuries BCE; the hypotheses sometimes also give historical information about the play's initial production at the City Dionysia (for more about tragic hypotheses, see Easterling 2014). The hypothesis to *Hippolytus* reports that it was performed in 428 BCE and was awarded first prize. It also claims that this is the second *Hippolytus*, the one called "Stephanias," and that Euripides "corrected" in this play what was unseemly and blameworthy. From these details, the *Hippolytus* we have is commonly understood to be the second of the two Euripides produced, a "do over" of sorts. (See Barrett (1964) 10–45 for his consideration of the evidence and his reconstruction of the lost *Hippolytus*, as well as of Sophocles' lost *Phaedra*; see Gibert (1997) and Hutchinson (2004) for their challenges both to this understanding of the order of the two plays and to Barrett's reconstruction of the lost play.) Often the surviving *Hippolytus* is

distinguished with the epithet “the garlandbearer” (*Stephanephoros* or *Stephanias*), called so after Hippolytus’ dedication of a garland to Artemis in his initial appearance in this play, and the lost play with the epithet “veiled” (*Kalyptomenos*), from a fragment that survives that seems to portray Hippolytus covering his head.

Barrett hypothesizes that the *Hippolytus Kalyptomenos* portrayed a “shameless and unprincipled” Phaedra who deliberately attempted to seduce Hippolytus, and that her advances toward him were likely performed on stage. Phaedra in that version was still alive to make her accusations against Hippolytus to Theseus. Only after Theseus has exiled and caused the death of Hippolytus is the truth revealed, and it is at that point that Phaedra kills herself (Barrett (1964) 11). Although Barrett himself characterizes the available evidence for reconstructing the lost play as “in general inadequate and uncertain” (Barrett (1964) 10), his reconstruction has been frequently accepted and has been influential on the work of other scholars, who often start from an assumption that the lost play was much as he posits (for examples, see Michelini (1987) 287–290; March (1990) 43–48; Gregory (1991) 51–52; Zeitlin (1996) 219–224, 280–281; McDermott 2000; for a different take, see Roisman (1999) 1–18).

This tantalizing fact of Euripides treating the same story twice certainly piques the imagination of modern readers, regardless of how little can be proved about how the two plays differ, let alone Euripides’ motives for trying again. The assumption is often made that the first play was unpopular with the audience, and that Phaedra’s brazen behavior was the cause of their disfavor. Therefore the major changes in the second attempt would center on Phaedra: her integrity, her reaction to her own feelings, and the timing of and motivations for her suicide. Other changes necessitated by this revised portrayal of Phaedra would follow.

We can never know definitively why Euripides made the choices he did—both to treat the same story again and how to do it differently the second time—but there are moments within the surviving play that make such a dynamic of second thoughts even more intriguing. McDermott (2000) has analyzed the surviving play for possible references to the first play and finds several lines in which an audience member who saw that first play may sense a second meaning alluding to the other Phaedra or other ways of telling the story. McDermott suggests that in this second attempt Euripides is primarily engaged in selfcorrection of his first version and by doing so creates a clever commentary on his own role as playwright (McDermott (2000) 246, 257). A motif of second attempts or second thoughts, however, also relates directly to the unfolding of these tragic events.

The most obvious mention of second thoughts is spoken by the Nurse. Once the Nurse knows Phaedra’s secret, she offers two different reactions to the revelation, and in neither case is she able to use the truth to decide correctly how to act. Her initial reaction to Phaedra’s admission that the object of her desires is Hippolytus is one of horror and shame, and her only solution is to die herself (353–361). She leaves the stage at that point. When she returns she admits she was shocked and frightened, but says she now realizes that she was being silly (433–435), and adds that “among mortals second thoughts are somehow wiser” (435–436). It is then that the Nurse tries to convince Phaedra that Phaedra could have a romantic liaison with Hippolytus and begins planning to approach him herself. McDermott argues that this line reflects both the

change in the Nurse's character from the first play to this one, that is, "from dissuader to corrupter," and Euripides' own change in thoughts about how to best present the story (McDermott (2000) 253–254). Regardless of whether this surviving play is the second one and whether it succeeded where the earlier play failed, let us notice that within the action of the drama the Nurse's second thoughts, that she should make it so that Phaedra can act on her feelings, are calamitous, and they set into motion the disaster to follow.

To this level of irony to her words, we may add another: for Phaedra and the Nurse, second thoughts are catastrophic, but both Hippolytus and Theseus may have benefited from second thoughts. Hippolytus' attendant suggests that he rethink his aversion to the worship of Aphrodite, but Hippolytus rejects his advice (99–113). When Theseus reads the letter he finds in the dead Phaedra's hand, the letter that accuses Hippolytus of rape, he immediately uses one of his three "curses" granted him by Poseidon (887–890). The Chorus advises him to take it back, since he might err in his judgment, but Theseus refuses, and adds a sentence of exile as well, all before he has even spoken to Hippolytus (891–898). Both men keep to their first thoughts, also to disastrous consequences.

Thus the Nurse's straightforward declaration that second thoughts are wiser becomes utterly ambiguous, as the action of the drama shows that sometimes second thoughts are, or at least could be, wiser, while at other times they are emphatically not. There are common human problems involved here: we act impetuously, especially in response to intense emotions like shock, grief, fear, and anger. Or we convince ourselves that something we know is wrong is acceptable, just because we want it so much or we want to please someone else. An extradramatic allusion that Euripides hopes that his second version of this story is a better one may reveal the playwright's shaping of the story, but the underlying ambiguity of the Nurse's assertion is deeply tied to the drama's central problems of knowing the truth and knowing how to act upon it, or, in Phaedra's words that we began with, knowing and recognizing what is right and then actually accomplishing it. Let us examine further the dilemmas each of the three main characters faces, and how their decisions are entangled by their emotions.

2 Phaedra

Phaedra dominates the first half of the play because her feelings are the starting point for the action, and what Phaedra does because of those feelings will determine everything else that happens. Does she try to suppress her feelings, no matter how strong they are? Does she try to find out if Hippolytus reciprocates her feelings? Does she try to convince him that they could get away with it, even if such a relationship is wrong? As strange as the latter two questions may seem, we can likely think of other examples of someone feeling desire for a person who is inappropriate or offlimits and somehow finding a justification in those feelings for whatever action he or she takes. And other portrayals of Phaedra, such as Ovid's *Heroides* 4 and Barrett's reconstruction of the *Hippolytus Kalyptomenos* by Euripides, have her acting in just these ways.

This Phaedra, however, has made the choice, at least to start, to keep her feelings to herself.

Aphrodite announces this state of affairs in the prologue: it was through her schemes that Phaedra fell in love with Hippolytus, and Phaedra has been suffering in silence (24–28, 38–40). When we see Phaedra on stage, we witness the effects of her feelings and of her attempts to restrain them: she is physically ill and seems delusional as she imagines herself in places where Hippolytus likes to go (176–238). Even when she regains her composure, she refuses to say what is affecting her so. Her resolve falters when her Nurse uses supplication—a way of asking that creates a social obligation for Phaedra—but at first she will admit only that she in love with another man, and then provides enough hints that the Nurse can guess it is Hippolytus she means (239–352). After the Nurse reacts to her admission with horror and leaves the stage, Phaedra's speech (373–430) provides greater insight into her own reactions to and reasoning about her situation (for more on this speech, see Kovacs (1980); Michelini (1987) 297–304; Goff (1990); Craik (1993); McClure (1999) 127–135; Nikolsky (2015) 45–64).

Phaedra tells us that her first plan was to keep silent (392–397) and that her second was to tolerate the folly of her feelings by overcoming them with selfcontrol (398–399). This idea of selfcontrol, of being *sōphrōn* (a word that also means "chaste") is a key theme of the play (see Gill (1990) and Gregory (1991) 59–70) and also significant to Hippolytus's own view of himself, to which we will return below. Phaedra's third plan, since she was not able to prevail over Aphrodite, is to die (400–402). In all three decisions, Phaedra is struggling against what she is feeling in an attempt to do the right thing, to remain faithful to her husband. Phaedra also speaks of her feelings of shame, her desire to be known as a honorable woman, her fear of discovery, and her concern for her children and how her reputation will affect them (403–430). Euripides thus gives us a complex and nuanced portrait of Phaedra's reactions to her own desires and of the decisions she has made. Kovacs has eloquently characterized her this way, "Phaedra's speech shows her to be a resolute woman who understands clearly the moral issues that confront her and is prepared to take drastic action" (Kovacs (1980) 300). Phaedra's self concept as a virtuous woman who lives up to society's dictates of good behavior cannot include these powerful feelings for her stepson (Gill (1990) 90). Her suffering is recognizable to any of us who have felt an inner conflict between who we think we are and particular thoughts or actions of ours that contradict our fundamental selfimage.

Phaedra's personal experiences, reactions, and decisions also are grounded in her life as a woman, which she says she knows makes her "an object of hate to all" (407; see also 669 where Phaedra laments the "unfortunate lot of women"). Her speech exposes the implicit dangers that women's sexuality was thought to involve (see further Rabinowitz (1986b); Rabinowitz (1993) 153–169; Zeitlin (1996) 234–249; and Mueller in this volume). Female desire provokes suspicion—Phaedra herself believes that women indulge in shameful behavior. Phaedra's words also indicate the scrutiny that women live under: their virtues may or may not be noticed, but their bad behavior certainly will be (403–407). She, like the prevailing culture, condemns adulterous women, especially those who are of high social status and thereby set a bad example for all, or those who talk about being chaste but act differently in private. Phaedra does not want to be like them (407–430). Phaedra's desire for her own stepson may be an extreme version of dangerous sexual desires, but female desire in general is considered problematic and is portrayed as a force that must be controlled. Moreover, passion

of any kind is considered dangerous. Aphrodite as the goddess of such desire has described her formidable power in the prologue, and the choral song performed after Phaedra's great speech (and after the Nurse returns and tries to convince Phaedra that there may be a way to satisfy her desires) is an ode on the destructive powers of Eros, the god of erotic desire (525–564, see Halleran (1991) for a full analysis; see also 1268–1282).

What is it that ruins someone's life? Phaedra knows what she is supposed to do, yet she cannot find a way to get past her feelings of desire other than to kill herself. Once the Nurse tells Hippolytus of her desire, Phaedra has further emotions to contend with: fear of the loss of her public reputation as a good woman and faithful wife and what that will mean for her children (420–423; 717–718), as well as hurt over Hippolytus's cruel rejection of her that shows he considers her contemptible and appalling. Phaedra's initial decision to commit suicide was made even before the Nurse told Hippolytus of her feelings (400–402), and she confirms those plans before she carries them out (723–727). But what made her decide to leave the incriminating letter accusing Hippolytus of rape? (See Mueller 2011 for her arguments that the letter should be understood as a judicial curse tablet.) Phaedra's last words before leaving the stage alive for the last time provide insight into how her fear and hurt are motivating that decision:

And I will become trouble to the other one [i.e., Hippolytus]

by dying, so that he may know not to be high and mighty

in response to my troubles. But sharing in this disease of mine,

having it in common, he will learn to control himself [to be *sōphrōn*].

(728–731)

Like Aphrodite in the prologue, Phaedra, too, wants Hippolytus not to "think big" (6) or to "be high and mighty" (730). Yet Phaedra also wants Hippolytus to share her "disease"—an image that encompasses her desire, the shame she feels over that desire, and the public disgrace her desire would engender if known (for more on the language of disease in the play and the possible appearance of Phaedra's mask, see McDermott (2000) 247–249). In other words, she wants him to feel all of what she feels. Aphrodite wants respect and honor (5, 8); Phaedra wants her love reciprocated and, barring that, she wants empathy from Hippolytus. Accusing him of illicit sexual activity puts him in a similar position of having to defend his moral integrity that Phaedra is grappling with (Gill (1990) 87 and Mueller (2011) 152 argue in different ways that Phaedra is attempting to make Hippolytus more like her or to switch places with him).

Phaedra's decision to save her own reputation at Hippolytus' expense seems often to lose from the reader whatever sympathy her earlier resolve had gained. Her false accusation is indeed deplorable (but see Kovacs (1980) 301–303 for a different interpretation of this line). Yet wanting those who hurt us to hurt as well is a recognizably human impulse, and strong emotions have temporarily overridden the selfdefinitions of both Phaedra and Hippolytus.

3 Hippolytus

Like Phaedra, Hippolytus' emotions can overwhelm his own sense of his *sōphrosunē*, "self control," and he also strives to do what he thinks is right, even if it is not to his own immediate benefit. When the Nurse approaches him (offstage), he must decide what he will do now that he knows his stepmother has romantic feelings for him. Later, he must decide how he will defend himself to Theseus against Phaedra's accusations of rape. In the first situation, Hippolytus reacts with intense disgust by the very suggestion that he would enter into a sexual relationship with his stepmother. But a key to the later dilemma about how to defend himself is also put into place then: the Nurse had Hippolytus swear an oath to keep silent about what she was about to tell him before she revealed Phaedra's feelings to him (609–615; see Fletcher (2012) 189–194 on the significance of the competing oaths in this play). Keeping that oath is integral to Hippolytus' selfconcept as a pious and honorable man.

The shock of the Nurse's revelation makes him initially act otherwise, however, and he rails onstage against all women (616–668; see Rabinowitz (1986b) and McClure (1999) 142–146 for more on this speech). The speech reveals Hippolytus' feelings not only about women, though, but also about sexuality and his own illegitimacy. Hippolytus is offended by the dishonorable prospect of sexual relations with his father's wife, but he also wants to avoid women altogether. His preferred universe would allow men to acquire children without sex, without women at all, through dedications of precious metals in temples (618–624). Since his own illegitimacy results from his unmarried, foreign mother—an Amazon whom he is very much like—such an arrangement would allow him not only to avoid sex with women but to reverse the circumstances of his own birth and be seen as a valuable person. His mother avoids living with men, even though she needed one to have a child; Hippolytus would like to live separately from women and not even need one to acquire a son. (See Ebbott (2003) 92–102 for more on how this speech relates to Hippolytus' illegitimacy and how the imagery of the counterfeit coin in 616, which Hippolytus applies to women, is more like his own bastard status.) His internal conflict about his illegitimacy is a driving force behind his vehemence, and those feelings also overwhelm the selfcontrol (*sōphrosunē* or being *sōphrōn*) that he claims to excel in (80, 994–995, 1007, 1100, 1365). Of course we wouldn't expect Hippolytus to reciprocate Phaedra's desire, but because of his own emotions, Hippolytus fails in the sympathy that Phaedra hoped to find from him—Phaedra wants him to recognize what she is suffering, and he cannot see beyond his own feelings.

I agree with the many scholars who think that the original staging showed Phaedra overhearing Hippolytus' rant (Parker (2001); Willink (2006) 15 makes the appealing suggestion that Phaedra conceals herself among the Chorus during Hippolytus' speech; see Kovacs (1987) 58–59 for an argument that Phaedra left the stage after speaking line 600). Phaedra believes she has reason to fear that Hippolytus will expose her secret due to his demonstrated abhorrence of her and of all women (she specifically names his anger as the reason he will tell Theseus and others about her, 689–692), and due to his own "second thoughts" about his oath when he declares that his heart and mind are unsworn (612). Phaedra can see that Hippolytus has misunderstood her feelings and intentions from whatever he heard from the Nurse. But Phaedra

in turn misunderstands that Hippolytus' feelings of disgust do not mean that he will break his oath and tell Theseus or anyone else.

Phaedra and Hippolytus mirror one another as they both strive for selfcontrol in their own ways, and Hippolytus' keeping of his oath becomes an inversion of Phaedra's original silence that represented her attempts at selfcontrol. In her case, silence meant keeping her suffering to herself; breaking her silence is the beginning of the tragic events. Hippolytus has the opportunity to speak the truth about what he heard, but chooses to keep silent, thereby furthering those same tragic events. (For more on the complex interplay of silence and speech in the drama, see Knox (1952); Goff (1990); Rabinowitz (1993) 159–165; Minadeo (1994); ChongGossard (2008) 134–145, 165–168, 185–190.) Hippolytus' sense of honor, his own selfimage as *sōphrōn*, means that he must keep his oath, and he will, despite Phaedra's fears to the contrary. But he also longs for his father to recognize him as honorable, worthy, legitimate—and so he is deeply hurt that his father would believe the accusations against him. Those emotions are also an obstacle to finding the means to convince his father of his innocence: not only will he not break his promise, but he expects his father to know him better than that anyway. In our consideration of Theseus, we will return to the scene between father and son to consider the problems of knowing the truth and of truly understanding another person.

4 Theseus

Theseus returns home and learns that his wife has just committed suicide. He expresses his intense grief and confusion, and he naturally wonders why she has killed herself (801–851). When her body is brought on stage, he discovers a note in her hand; he reads it, declares that what it contains cannot be spoken, but finally tells the Chorus that Hippolytus has committed sexual violence against his wife (856–886). In the very next lines, he uses a curse to condemn Hippolytus to death. Wishing that the man you think raped your wife would die is an understandable reaction, but there are two important additional factors here: that man is his son, and Theseus has the power to make such a wish actually happen. When the Chorus warns him to take his curse back, he not only refuses, but adds a sentence of exile, just in case his curse is not fulfilled (891–898; Gregory 2009 argues that both the role of Poseidon in this curse and the sentence of exile may be among the revisions Euripides made in this version of the play). It is easy for a spectator at his or her remove from the action, just as it is for the chilly and detached Artemis toward the end of the play (1320–1324), to blame Theseus for invoking this curse on his own son without investigating Phaedra's accusations. But how could we expect him to react differently when confronted with his wife's suicide? Theseus, too, is doing what he thinks is right—avenging his wife's rape and death, and punishing the one who wronged him.

When Hippolytus enters and sees that Phaedra is dead, Theseus is already in this heightened emotional state. Faced with the death of his wife, and the seeming betrayal by his own son, Theseus wishes for some sure proof of who is a true friend (*philos*, someone who is "near anddear"):

Alas, there ought to be for mortals some proof of friends,

something clear, and a way to diagnose their hearts and minds,

who is a true friend and who is not,

and all mortals ought to have two voices,

one that is just and the other however it happens to be,

so that the voice planning unjust actions would be refuted

by the just voice, and we would not be deceived.

(925–931)

Theseus' wish, which is just as impossible as Hippolytus' scheme for the asexual acquisition of children, attempts to solve the problem of determining truth in speech. How can we trust the words someone else speaks, whether those words are "I love you" or "I didn't do it"? Being deceived by the words of another is an ever present possibility. In the words of Charles Segal, the Athenian audience longed for lucidity and clarity of definitions in all matters, but "tragedy asserts the recalcitrant ambiguity of everything human" (Segal (1988) 281). In the confrontation that follows, Hippolytus and Theseus wrestle with just such problems of ambiguity that exist no less for us than they did for the Athenians. How do we know the truth from a lie? How can we make the right decision when we don't know what is true, or when we are deceived? How can we convince someone of the truth when he believes a lie? Theseus rejects any oaths Hippolytus may take that he is not guilty, favoring instead the "testimony" of Phaedra's death, her letter, and her dead body (944–972; 1057–1058; 1077). Hippolytus tries to convince him with an oath using the strongest possible terms anyway (1025–1031), but in his attempts to convince his father of his virtues, he finds an unsympathetic judge, not only in Theseus but in many critics as well (but see Kovacs (1987) 63–64 for his defense of Hippolytus in this scene).

Once again there is a failure of sympathy on both sides. Each man, in his grief, his shock, and his emotional pain, does not recognize or regard those feelings in the other (see also Barker on *Orestes* and Visvardi on *Alcestis* in this volume). Robert Bagg identifies "the characters' inability to penetrate and understand each other's inner lives" as the "essential component" to the unfolding of the tragedy (Bagg (1992) 10). Our access to the inner lives of others is primarily through what they say, but here words are ineffectual because doubts about their truth overwhelm. Yet words do have power, as the power of Theseus' curse attests. His words alone can make exile happen, and his words alone cause Hippolytus' death. The questions of what is true and how to judge the words of another, then, are no intellectual exercise in this drama: they are a matter of life and death.

As spectators of the drama, we also have the opportunity to understand the inner lives of the characters through their words. As the story progresses, I am aware of my own sympathies shifting back and forth. No one of the characters is entirely sympathetic or entirely repugnant. I experience "the kind of emotional contradictions that can be produced in an audience by

tensions between sympathy and judgement" (Lawrence (2013) 227). I have attempted here to convey why I find them sympathetic, and so let me briefly identify here some moments when I feel repelled from each: Phaedra when she falsely accuses Hippolytus in her letter; Hippolytus when he rants about trampling on all women (668); Theseus when he seems to want Hippolytus to feel pain in exile (1045–1050). I expect other readers or audience members will have similarly complicated and mixed reactions, not necessarily at the same points in the drama. Rabinowitz (1986a) intriguingly argues that the very structure of the play shifts the role of the audience from a more distant and critical role at the beginning, when they are consciously aware that they are watching a work of art, to one more absorbed in the story, responding as if to reallife events, at the end. The possibility of multiple and changing reactions is a mark of Euripides' success in creating characters who can move us as much (even if in different ways) as they did the original audience.

5 The Role of the Gods

Most of the human decisions and actions take place between the appearances of two goddesses on stage, and their roles in the drama must be taken into account. Aphrodite and Artemis would have been intimately known by the ancient audience, who saw temples to them everyday and participated in rituals to worship them. They are familiar to us, however, only through stories and plays such as this one, and can seem at times strange and at other times overly simplistic. We do not have a ritual relationship with these gods, and thus we lack a native understanding of them. That gap in familiarity means that some things which would have been obvious and in no need of explanation for a fifthcentury Athenian remain opaque and in need of investigation for us. There is a long history of scholarship attempting to understand Euripides' portrayal of the gods and his thoughts about religion (see also Fletcher in this volume). Here I will consider the gods in a much more limited way, focusing exclusively on how their roles contribute to an emotional engagement with the human characters. (Two very different interpretations of the role of the gods in the *Hippolytus* are Luschnig (1980) and Blomqvist (1982); see also Knox (1952), Kovacs (1987) 71–77, and Nikolsky (2015) 93–121).

The first character on stage is the goddess Aphrodite, and so the role of the gods is forefronted by her presence as well as her words. Through her, the tragedy in the *Hippolytus* occurs at an intersection of sex and religion. Such a combination may make us think of religious condemnations of promiscuity, but this punishing deity is instead angered over Hippolytus' *refusal* of sexual activity with women. That refusal Aphrodite, a goddess of both sexual desire and procreation, considers a rejection of her power, a personal insult. Aphrodite's words imply that a certain humility is necessary: she trips up those who "think big" with respect to her (6). She also needs to show her power: not only does she declare that she is a big deal both among mortals and in heaven (1–4), she announces that she will prove it by what happens to Hippolytus (9). The power of the gods coupled with their mystery, their inscrutability, is a potent force in the lives of the human characters in Athenian tragedy.

We modern readers sometimes wrestle with the idea that the gods in tragedy can influence but do not control mortals. Even though Aphrodite is often named in the play, including by herself,

as the cause of the events, she does not determine how the humans choose to respond to their emotions or choose to act. Aphrodite's instigation of Phaedra's desire need not be rationalized away by making Aphrodite simply "symbolic" in order to avoid an interpretation that humans are "puppets" of the gods. There is no indication either that humans have no free will or that their own sense of control over their actions is illusory. But the gods set the terms under which the humans live and make their choices. In other words, the gods do not control the players, but they do control the game, and the game is rigged.

In this game Aphrodite can punish Hippolytus for his slights, while later Artemis praises him for his virtues. Aphrodite admits that Phaedra is "collateral damage" in her plan to punish Hippolytus (47–50), and Theseus will be as well (1403–1404). The offstage role of Poseidon, keeping his own oath to fulfill whatever wish Theseus makes, suggests that the gods allow humans to trip themselves up as well. This indifference of the gods toward the fatal consequences of their actions for mortals is, Artemis explains, a "custom of the gods" (1328): she excuses her inaction in protecting her close companion Hippolytus by explaining that one god cannot override the wish of another (1329–1334). Instead, Artemis will avenge Hippolytus' death later by killing one of Aphrodite's favorite mortals (1416–1422). The fact that this unnamed person is in no way responsible for Hippolytus' death does not seem to bother Artemis at all. The gods use mortals to display their power and to hurt one another, and the human beings suffer the consequences. This chilling portrayal of the gods (especially considering that, as Hippolytus' attendant says, the gods ought to be wiser than mortals [120]), their seeming amorality when it comes to human lives, throws into stark relief the human struggle to pursue what is right, to discover what is true. Seeing the callous game that the gods play makes Phaedra, Hippolytus, Theseus, and even the Nurse all the more sympathetic.

6 Finding Sympathy

Artemis does, however, reveal to Theseus what really happened (coming from a goddess, he believes it), and also sets up moments of human forgiveness and sympathy. Artemis tells Theseus to embrace Hippolytus, and Hippolytus not to hate his father (1431–1436). She emphasizes that Theseus involuntarily destroyed Hippolytus, blaming Aphrodite for everything (1400, 1406, 1433–1434; see Nikolsky (2015) for more on the language of involuntary or unwilling acts by all three human characters). Hippolytus and Theseus begin to understand what the other is suffering: Hippolytus says that he mourns more for Theseus than himself, while Theseus says he would willingly die in Hippolytus' place (1409–1410). After Artemis leaves the stage, and just before Hippolytus dies, Hippolytus forgives his father and releases him from guilt over his death (1449–1450). This forgiveness is possible because they have finally found sympathy for one another (Kovacs (1987) 69). Although human emotions have been a major force behind the destructive events, they are also the means for reconciliation and consolation. With two people left on stage, father and son, the emphasis is on understanding, empathy, and love—all arriving tragically late, but at least before Hippolytus dies.

In addition to the vengeance that Artemis promises to take on Hippolytus' (but really her own) behalf, she also declares that in compensation for his death, he will have a hero cult in Troizen

(1424), with a ritual she describes this way:

Unyoked girls before their weddings
will cut their hair for you, and throughout the ages
you will reap the abundant sorrows of their tears.
And always the musical thoughts of virgins
will be for you, and Phaedra's desire for you will not turn out
to be without renown nor will it be kept silent.

(1425–1430)

There is some dispute among scholars about whether this passage refers to an actual cult practice among the ancient Greeks or was invented by Euripides for the drama (Barrett (1964) 3–6 summarizes the evidence for Hippolytus' cults in both Troizen and Athens; Scullion (1999–2000) 225 concedes that Hippolytus did have a cult at Troizen, but argues that Euripides fabricated the premarriage ritual described here; Seaford (2009) 230 responds to Scullion's arguments). Our knowledge of Greek religious practices is incomplete, and so although Euripides may be the only source we have for such a ritual in honor of a male hero, rather than a heroine or goddess, we cannot prove that the absence of other confirming evidence indicates fabrication. My point about this ritual, in any case, is how the tears of the girls indicate sympathy for Hippolytus' suffering. The commemoration of Hippolytus in this cult replays the destructive nature of passion in the sorrows (*penthē*, 1427) of the unmarried girls. Yet through the religious rituals, the inappropriate desires of Phaedra and the absent desires of Hippolytus will be corrected as those young women learn to channel their own sexual desires into marriage, and Hippolytus' own illegitimate birth will be avoided. Thus even sympathy for those feeling illicit passion is redirected by the cult in a way that society approves.

But does Phaedra figure at all in this sympathy found at the end of the play? MitchellBoyask contends that "the potentially dangerous empathy the Chorus women feel for Phaedra is transformed into the ritual lamentations of maidens to Hippolytus" (MitchellBoyask (1999) 60), seemingly transferring female sympathies to him. Rabinowitz (1986a and 1986b) argues that Phaedra is left out of this scene, and her story is appropriated by Hippolytus in his cult worship by unmarried girls. When Phaedra is remembered, it is only in relation to Hippolytus and what she wanted to keep silent and unknown will be repeatedly recounted forever. I agree with Rabinowitz that Phaedra's story is subordinated to Hippolytus' in the cult, but to my mind, she is not entirely forgotten here at the end of the play. Artemis praises her attempts to overcome what Aphrodite inflicted on her (1300–1306), and she is credited with ownership of her desire (1429–1430). The fact that her desire will not be "without renown" does allow a connection between the girls worshipping in the ritual and Phaedra—perhaps there she will find a measure of sympathy. I may be reaching as I try to find some positive remembrance of Phaedra or sympathy for her suffering, and to even attempt to do so may signal a difference

between a modern audience and the ancient one. It is important to recognize the means by which our sympathies are engaged and even manipulated by a drama, and yet I feel as though I can and do remain sympathetic to Phaedra as much as to Theseus and Hippolytus at the end.

Too often Athenian tragedy is boiled down to a particular "message" or "lesson." Perhaps the urge to find one is a result of being a reader—or even more so, a scholar—of these dramas, rather than experiencing them as a viewer of a performance, with a human presence before our eyes and a human voice other than our own speaking these words. The impulse to find a lesson in this play may be particularly strong because Phaedra herself says she wants Hippolytus to *learn* to be *sōphrōn* (731). Although we may learn much in watching or reading this play, there is no single "message" or "moral" to a great tragedy such as this one; to reduce it to one ignores its complexity. We might consider instead the experience of watching the play, of hearing the words, of seeing the actors, and identifying with one or perhaps all three of the main characters in their struggles. Witnessing the force of human emotions within the characters while feeling our own in sympathy with theirs is an experience that this superb tragedy offers, and paying attention to our own emotional reactions reveals the continuing power of this drama.

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FURTHER READING

There are many ways to read the *Hippolytus*. In addition to the studies I have cited within my essay, I point here to some other possible directions of interpretation. Konstan (2006) examines the representation of emotions in classical Greek literature. He argues that their emotions are different from ours in significant respects, so my approach here may not agree

with his. Some scholarship looks at particular aspects of the play's language: Segal's work brilliantly investigates the play's language and imagery (1965, 1970, 1993), and Luschnig (1988) treats in detail the subject of knowledge in the play. Other scholarship situates the drama within its fifthcentury BCE cultural context. Like Gill (1990), Budzowska (2012) examines the relationship between the *Hippolytus* and contemporary philosophical questions about virtue. Meltzer (2006) 71–103 gives a political interpretation of the "just voice" that Theseus desires. Nikolsky (2015) situates the language of the play in contemporary legal, rhetorical, and philosophical ideas of culpability.

CHAPTER 9
Andromache

Ian C. Storey

Euripides' *Andromache* has never enjoyed a great critical reputation. The author of the second hypothesis, probably Aristophanes of Byzantium, includes the play "among those of the second rank," although admitting that the opening speech by Andromache is "clear and logical" and that Hermione and Peleus have their acceptable dramatic moments. Critics of the play tend to call attention to its episodic nature, although a clear thematic rhythm can be detected in each "episode" (danger, despair, rescue), or to the lack of a single central character. For those who dislike the play, it is melodrama rather than tragedy. For others the gratuitous attacks on the Spartan way of life and the moments of humor seem foreign to what a "proper" Greek tragedy should be. Much of the problem is due to expectation of what a Greek tragedy ought to be—here *Oedipus Tyrannus* or *Bacchae* is trotted out as the ideal—and plays that seem somehow different are relegated to the "second rank."

1 Synopsis

Andromache, the widow of Hector, the great Trojan defender slain by Achilles, has been given as a victoryprize to Achilles' son, Neoptolemus. Back in Phthia, where Peleus, Achilles' father, still rules, Neoptolemus lives with his (unwilling) concubine, Andromache, and their young son (traditionally named Molossus). Neoptolemus' legitimate wife, Hermione, the daughter of Helen and Menelaus of Sparta, is childless and blames Andromache for alienating her husband's affections. While Neoptolemus is away in Delphi, Hermione and her father plot to murder Andromache and her child. Andromache is enticed away from her refuge in the sanctuary of Thetis (the seagoddess whom Peleus married) and is about to perish at the hands of Menelaus, when she is rescued by Peleus' sudden intervention. Menelaus departs in haste for home and now it is Hermione's turn to despair, fearing what her husband will say and do on his return from Delphi. She is in her turn rescued by Orestes, to whom she had been previously engaged, and they flee together. News comes to Peleus that his grandson Neoptolemus has been treacherously murdered at Apollo's temple by Orestes and a band of Delphians. It is Peleus' turn to despair, but he is consoled by the arrival of Thetis, his goddesswife, who foretells a noble destiny for Andromache and her son and her own reunion with Peleus as husband and wife. The Chorus is made up of local women of Phthia, who are sympathetic to Andromache and Peleus.

2 Date and Production

Neither of the two hypotheses gives any details of production, but a scholion to line 445 provides some unexpected and controversial information:

> It is not possible to get an exact date for the play, since it was not produced at Athens. Callimachus says that the tragedy was ascribed to Democrates . . . the play appears to have been written in the time of the Peloponnesian War.

Twenty tragedies are attributed to a tragedian from Sicyon named Democrates (*TrGF* I 124), but he appears to be Hellenistic, and it is possible that this man wrote an *Andromache*, which has led to Callimachus' statement. That the play "was not produced at Athens" is usually taken to mean that it was not to be found in the official didascalia for Athens, and a number of possibilities may be entertained. The play could have been performed under another's name, or under another title, although Euripides' plays do not seem to have had alternative titles in the manner attested for Aeschylus, Sophocles, and for comedy. The simplest explanation is that "Andromache" had dropped out of the official record through dittography with "Andromeda."

The scholiast's comment does raise the issue of production of plays other than at Athens. We know of productions of Aeschylus' *Persians* and *Men of Etna* in Sicily, and of Euripides' *Archelaus* in 408/7 for the king of Macedon, and we are told that Socrates would go to the Peiraeus to attend a tragedy by Euripides (Aelian *Miscellany* 2.13). Page (1936) suggested that the unnamed city at line 734–5 was Argos and that the unusual elegiacs at 103–16 reflect a Peloponnesian tradition of lament in that metre, thus suggesting a performance at Argos. Taplin (1999) 48) considers Thessaly, Butrica (2001) more plausibly Molossia as possible places of production, the latter pointing out the parallels between Tharyps, the young king of Molossia, and the son of Andromache. Lloyd ((1994) 12) astutely observes that nothing about *Andromache* differs markedly from plays we know to have been performed in Athens. It would be odd if *Andromache* were performed only outside Athens, and I suspect that an error or a lacuna in the didascalia is to blame.

Dating a play by Euripides depends usually on three factors. First, references to contemporary events or persons may provide a *terminus post quem*, but these are often the product of subjective modern ingenuity. Most attempts should be regarded with suspicion. The strongest such case is to see *Trojan Women* against the background of the preparations for the Athenian armada to Sicily in 415. For *Andromache*, as the scholiast noted, a date in the Peloponnesian War seems indicated, especially given the two personal attacks on Spartan *mores*, first by Andromache at 445–63 and later by Peleus at 590–604, both directed at the Spartan king Menelaus. Some have tried to find a particular moment in the Archidamian War (431–421) which might account for the venom in the mouth of Euripides' characters and resonate in the minds of the spectators, but nothing seems especially convincing (see Conacher (1967) 170–1).

Second, we may detect a logical sequence between two plays and again a terminus is implied. For example, when Athena declares at the end of *Iphigeneia among the Taurians* that she has asked Poseidon for a calm sea and prosperous voyage for Orestes (1442–5), we may see this as an intertextual reference back to the opening of *Trojan Women*, where she had asked Poseidon for a destructive storm to wreak havoc on Greeks returning home (48–97). That in turn suggests a *terminus post quem* of 414 for the *IT*. *Andromache* can be pulled in two directions, towards plays such as *Hecuba* (mid420s?) and *Trojan Women* (415) which

dramatize the effects of war on the women of defeated Troy, but its domestic themes have much in common with tragedies such as *Medea* (431), *Hippolytus* (428), and the lost *Stheneboea* (430?). In particular Hermione's complaint about the pernicious effects of female association and gossip at 929–53 remind one of Phaedra's great speech on virtue (*Hippolytus* 373–430), and both Hermione and Phaedra are queens in marital distress in a foreign land, each attended by a nurse (see the discussion by Ebbott, Chapter 8 in this volume).

Finally Euripides' wellknown development in the use of resolution in the iambic trimeter can imply a general point in his career, if not an exact year (see also Gibert and Lamari in this volume). The resolution figure of 16 percent suggests a date after *Hippolytus* (428–6 percent) and close in time, perhaps a bit earlier, to *Hecuba* (19 percent) and *Suppliant Women* (17 percent). Neither of these can be securely dated, but 425–422 is a safe enough bet. Thus Conacher's ((1967) 166 n. 1) conclusion, "probably between 427 and 425," is about as far as we can go with confidence.

3 Euripides and the Myth

The most important word in the study of classical literature is "version," since Greek myths did not exist in a formal and unchanging canon. Poets and dramatists were expected to add their own "twist" to a familiar story, perhaps the most famous being Stesichorus' lost *Palinode*, in which Helen did not go to Troy after all. Even given this practice in the retelling of myth, Euripides is especially famous for the boldness of his innovations in plot and character. Not for nothing does Aristophanes refer at *Women at the Thesmophoria* 851 to his "new" (*kainēn*) *Helen*, "new" both as "brand new" and as "newfangled." Just about every extant tragedy of Euripides contains some departure from or addition to familiar storylines (see Dubischar Chapter 25 in this volume). Most notably we may adduce Medea's murder of her children, Phaedra's change from seductive "Potiphar's wife" to the virtuous (*sōphrōn*) character in the revised *Hippolytus*, and Pentheus in *Bacchae*, who goes to the mountain not at the head of his army, but alone, the dupe of Dionysus, there to be brutally murdered by his mother and the women of Thebes. If we can determine what changes Euripides has made in his *Andromache*, either his own innovations or choosing a much lessknown aspect of the story, this will help the critic assess what Euripides wanted to do with that drama. The studies of Sorum (1995) and Allan ((2000) 4–9) are especially useful here.

Andromache is familiar to us, first from her moving appearance in *Iliad* 6, where Homer presents the "happy family" of Hector with his wife and young child, a dramatic contrast to the sordid relationship between Paris and Helen in *Iliad* 3. She appears twice again in the poem, as witness to Hector's death in *Iliad* 22 and then as one of the three formal mourners in book 24. Her prediction there of an unhappy life with her son in slavery ironically comes true in *Andromache*, but the son is her child by Neoptolemus. Arctinus' poem in the Epic Cycle, *Capture of Troy*, is the earliest evidence for a relationship between Neoptolemus and Andromache, but Proclus' summary states only that the son of Achilles took Andromache as his prize of war. From the fifth century Pindar (*Nemean* 7–461 BCE) knows of the death of Neoptolemus at Delphi, but with no instigation by Orestes and no complicity of the Delphians

or Apollo. Pindar speaks of his offspring ruling in Molossia, but does not mention Andromache. Eustathius (*On the Odyssey* 1479.10) gives a summary of Sophocles' lost *Hermione*, in which Tyndareus had betrothed Hermione to Orestes during the Trojan War, but Menelaus revoked that arrangement and promised her to Neoptolemus. After the murder of Neoptolemus at Delphi, where he had gone to seek justice from Apollo for his father's death, Hermione then returns to her former fiancé, Orestes. The text does not make it clear whether Orestes and Neoptolemus come into direct conflict in Sophocles' play, as they will in Pacuvius' later *Hermiona*. Pherecydes (F 64a) also records the death of Neoptolemus at Delphi, at the hands of robbers whom he has interrupted, the reason for his journey being to inquire about the childlessness of his wife Hermione. The scholiast to *Andromache* 32 shows that in tragedies by Philocles (*TrGF* 24 F 2) and Theognis (*TrGF* 28 F 2) Hermione was already pregnant by Orestes before being married to Neoptolemus. If these tragedies are earlier than *Andromache*, we can see Euripides taking themes from current versions of the story of Neoptolemus and arriving at his own creation.

Euripides moves the setting to Phthia, which does not figure in the earlier versions, and to the house where Peleus and Thetis lived when they were man and wife. He makes the play a domestic love triangle centred on Neoptolemus and the two women in his life, as compared to the traditional triangle involving Hermione and her two men, Orestes and Neoptolemus. Two men are no longer fighting over a woman, but two women over a man. Euripides has brought together Andromache, prize of war, and Hermione, the childless wife, into a domestic tragedy. Andromache becomes much more than a peripheral character in the story, but the sympathetic focus of the play and the hope for a happy future through the son that she has had by Neoptolemus. She is cast as the ideal wife, even to the point of having nursed Hector's bastard children so that she might not display any bitterness (222–5). Torrance (2005), however, sees an intentional discrepancy between her status as a slavewoman and her behaviour as the highborn wife of Hector and suspects that the original spectators may not have been so sympathetic as a modern reader.

Euripides recasts the role and character of Neoptolemus, a central character in Sophocles' *Hermione*, but here only his lifeless body will appear, and much is made of his absence. Euripides makes it clear that his trip to Delphi is due not to anger for Apollo's complicity in his father's death nor to concern about his wife's infertility, but to a desire to make amends for his previous *mania* in accusing Apollo and to seek the god's favour in the future (50–53, 1002–8, 1106–8). We are too prone to see in Neoptolemus the attractive and virtuous young character in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*; the traditional depiction of him was closer to the bloodthirsty thug of Vergil's *Aeneid* Book 2, or the man who demands and executes the sacrifice of Polyxena—see the brutal portrayal on London 1887.7–27.2, a blackfigure Athenian amphora dated around 550 BCE. His recantation and sympathetic behaviour at Delphi are clearly Euripides' addition to the story and will cast Orestes and Delphi into a less favourable light.

At the end, during the epiphany of Thetis, we encounter two other likely additions to the story by Euripides. First is the predicted marriage between Andromache and the Trojan survivor, Helenus (1243–9). This is familiar to every reader of *Aeneid* 3, where Aeneas visits and

rejects what is a pale reflection of glorious Troy, but is precisely the sort of detail that Euripides would create in one of his famous aetiologies at the end of a drama. Finally Thetis promises a reconciliation with her estranged husband, Peleus, promising him both immortality and married life with her in the house of Nereus (1253–8).

4 "If gods do wrong . . ."

Euripides had a reputation in comedy for either not believing in the gods or for having his own peculiar deities. Keeping in mind that he was neither a philosopher nor a theologian, we see in his plays a dramatic expansion of Xenophanes' criticism (F 11) of the traditional gods of epic and myth:

> Homer and Hesiod attribute to the gods all that we humans find shameful: deceiving one another, stealing, and adultery.

His plays dramatize the discontinuity between the traditional anthropomorphic gods of Homer and a higher and more ethical sort of divinity, between human expectation and divine "reality.". Often humans have a higher notion of a what a god should be, witness the comment of the old man at *Hippolytus* 120, "gods should be wiser (*sophōterous*) than mortals," and all too often in Euripides mortals are disappointed by their gods.

Andromache is not one of Euripides' more obviously "theological" plays. But a god (Thetis) does appear at the end, and another (Apollo) allows the fall of a city which he himself had built (Troy), countenances a son to kill his mother, and then aids in the murder of Neoptolemus at his own shrine at Delphi. We may then examine what the gods in *Andromache* are like and how they behave. Our first hint comes in the Chorus' depiction of the Judgment of Paris (274–91), where the beautiful goddesses are engaged in "hateful strife (*eris*)," contending "with an extravagance of malicious words," with Cypris winning with "deceptive words" that will prove bitter for the city of Troy. Whether we take "malicious" as directed towards each other or towards Paris, this picture of divinity is not an attractive one. Sorum (1995) is particularly good on the dramatic implications of the Judgement in *Andromache*.

Neoptolemus' change of heart toward Apollo is first mentioned by Andromache at 51–5, with an emphasis on *dikē*, that key word for *Oresteia*. Neoptolemus had previously demanded *dikē* from Apollo for killing his father, but now goes to offer *dikē* for his earlier madness (*mania*). But at 1002–8 Orestes tells us how unsuccessful this supplication of the god will be, again using this opposition of *dikē* and revealing that Neoptolemus' murder will be accomplished "by his doing and by my slanders." Orestes concludes with a sentiment typical of Euripidean pessimism about the gods: "For a god overturns the fortunes of his enemies (*echthroi*) and does not permit them thoughts of pride." *Echthroi* means "personal enemies"—it is depressing to imagine gods having mortals as "enemies." This passage is followed immediately by a Chorus on how the Trojan War has worked havoc upon both Greeks and Trojans, and in three of the four stanzas Apollo and Poseidon are portrayed as the agents, who abandoned Troy, the city they had built, and presided over a bloody war and the demise of Troy. Then Apollo alone through his oracle has commanded Orestes to kill his mother, leading the Chorus to proclaim,

“O god, O Phoebus, how do I believe this?”

The messenger recounts the death of Neoptolemos at Delphi (1085–1165), blaming first the lies told by Orestes that Neoptolemus has come to sack the temple, and then the suspicious Delphians who refuse to believe Neoptolemus’ protest that he is here to make amends (for the third time using the opposition of *dikē*) and attack him from ambush. Finally “a strange and frightening voice from inside the shrine” (1147–8) rallies the fleeing Delphians and Neoptolemus is finally slain. The voice must be that of Apollo, and we notice that in this play a visit to the oracle at Delphi has led on two occasions to his countenancing murder. The messenger concludes:

> This is what the god who prophesies to others, the giver of justice to all men, has done to the son of Achilles, who was offering to make amends. Like an inferior man, he thought only about quarrels in the past. How then can he be wise (*sophos*)?
>
> (1162–5)

This is the same word, *sophos*, that the servant in *Hippolytos* had hoped to claim for the gods, and which Castor at *Electra* 1244–6, will deny to Apollo (“he may be *sophos*, but his oracles were not *sopha*”).

The play’s other deity is Thetis, daughter of the seagod Nereus, wife (for a time) of Peleus and mother to Achilles. Throughout the play we are reminded that the setting is the shrine to Thetis, that Andromache has taken refuge at her altar, and while her arrival at the end may be unexpected, it is somehow appropriate. Is Thetis that rare creature in Euripidean drama, a truly benevolent deity? Or should we be seeking out an ironic touch to her role in the play? A few minor notes of unease may be sounded. First just as “Paris did not bring a marriage to lofty Ilion, but destruction” (103), the marriage of Peleus and Thetis was the ultimate cause of the Trojan War and all the suffering on both sides. Second the couple had to live apart, “avoiding the public” (18–19). We may recall the unions of Aphrodite with Anchises and Eos with Tithonus—goddesses uniting with mortals do not have a good track record in Greek myth. Finally this was ultimately a failed marriage, since Thetis by the time of the *Iliad* has returned to her father’s home. While one may be impressed by her concern for Peleus and her promise of reunion, the reunion will be on her terms, in her father’s house (1257). On the other hand, the problem of a union between god and mortal will be solved simply, by making Peleus immortal and unchanging (remember what Eos forgot to request for Tithonus).

Thus two principal deities are at work in this drama. Apollo is portrayed in a critical light, not for the only time in Euripides (cf. *Ion*, *Electra*, *Orestes*), and seems to be that typical anthropomorphic deity at the centre of Euripides’ speculations about the gods (“how can he be *sophos*?”). Then we encounter Thetis, a goddess who has come to release Peleus from his moment of despair, just as Peleus had come for Andromache in the first movement of the drama. She has come “because of our former marriage” (1231) and to resume that marriage by making him immortal. But as Allan ((2000) 264) points out “a benign deity set against a malign one does not remove our questions.” Thetis insists that the “gods do care about Troy” (1251), but in the next breath attributes its destruction to the will of Athena. Much could depend on

staging, intonation, and body language.

5 Reading *Andromache*

Critics face three questions about this drama by Euripides. First is there a central character or focus in the play, and if so, who is it? Second is there a consistent dramatic unity within the play? Third is the result a successful play? The answers to these questions have led to a wide variety of critical views and appreciation of the play.

We tend to attach considerable significance to titles, and since the play has come down to us as "Andromache," we expect that she will be the main character and focus of the drama. As with *Antigone*, it is something of a disappointment when she leaves with Peleus at line 765, apparently not to return, certainly not as a speaking character. Even if she and her son appear as silent figures with Peleus in the last movement, the play has moved on to other issues after she leaves. Even so, Erbse (1966) among others considers her as the central figure, against whom other characters are measured morally. There are those (Garyza (1963); Kyriakou (2005)) who would regard Hermione as the main player, albeit an unattractive one. But neither woman dominates the action as a whole, and we should look at the play rather as a triptych in which a character is in distress and danger, communicates their despair in song (Andromache at 103–16, Hermione at 825–65, Peleus at 1173–1225), interacts with an unnamed minor character (fellowslave, nurse, messenger), and then is rescued unexpectedly by the intervention of a figure from their past (Peleus, Orestes, Thetis). The deliberate parallels between these three scenes suggest strongly that this is how Euripides intends the spectator or reader to interpret the drama. Euripides is fond of the theme of distress and rescue in the dramas we have, and in *Andromache* he has dramatized this theme in three parts.

Regarding *Andromache* as a single play in three connected movements seems in my view to be the simplest way of answering the second question. But other attempts have been made. Boulter (1966) and Lee (1975) consider the drama an exploration of *sōphrosynē* and *to sōphron*, the concepts crucial to the extant *Hippolytus*. Kitto focuses attention on the outbursts against Sparta and considers *Andromache* to be "not incidentally, but fundamentally, a violent attack on the Spartan mind . . . in particular on three Spartan qualities, arrogance, treachery and ruthlessness" (Kitto (1961) 230). For this to work Orestes, in reality an Argive, must be viewed as an extension of the Spartan personality, since only in the first of the three movements do we actually see Spartans cast in a negative light. As we have seen above, *Andromache* can be viewed through the lens of Euripidean "theology." Burnett (1971) includes this play among her "catastrophes survived" and for her the divine order, even the role of Apollo, is essentially benevolent, since the nobility of Andromache and Peleus is rewarded in the predictions made by Thetis. Friedrich (1953) finds the play to be a savage attack on Apollo, while Allan (2000) sees an ambiguous divine level, typical of Euripides. Mossman (1996) is the most recent in a series of attempts to see the absent Neoptolemus as the unifying force in the drama, ironically so since only his corpse will return to take centre stage at the end. Finally some have seen in *Andromache* perhaps an early expression of themes that will dominate *Hecuba*, *Trojan Women*, and *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, that is, the bitter consequences of war, especially (but not exclusively

so) as worked out on women.

But since this is a drama in three distinct episodes (if one may use that term without damning the drama as "episodic"), we should be looking for the connecting themes between these sections. I have already pointed out the structural repetition of distressdespairrescue within these scenes, but we can determine other thematic issues. Papadimitropoulos (2006) has argued that *Andromache* shows the consequences of a "marriage that has destroyed a house," but this can be expanded to include both Greeks and Trojans alike. The marriage of Peleus and Thetis was, after all, the ultimate cause of the War, and when Thetis announces their reconciliation at the end, it does give the reader pause to consider whether it was all a terrible waste. At 103–4 Andromache states explicitly that "Paris did not bring a marriage (*gamos*) to the bedchambers of Troy, but rather a destruction (*atê*)." Here is one of several unnatural unions in this play. The Trojan War as a whole has been responsible for domestic dislocation on a large scale. At 1038–46 Greek wives have lost their husbands and been forced to seek new ones. The war has caused the union of Andromache with the son of the man who slaughtered her "natural" husband Hector; thus this union, for all its fruitfulness in producing a child, is one that should not have been. Similarly Hermione was engaged to Orestes, her "natural" partner, but because of Neoptolemus' valour at Troy Menelaus has dissolved that relationship and married her to the son of Achilles. Again another unnatural union. Even the union of Peleus and Thetis can be viewed with suspicion in that they had to live "apart from mankind" (18) and the bride, like both Andromache and Hermione, will leave her husband. Andromache's marriage has been ended by violence; Hermione, like her mother, will break her marriage by fleeing with another man—but in her case the second union is her "natural" one. Finally Thetis has left her husband to return to her father's home, but at the end she and Peleus will be reunited on her terms, as he must be made immortal so that this "natural" union may finally flourish.

Conacher ((1967) 166–80) argues that the repeated theme of abandonment, despair, and deliverance can be applied to the three communities of the play: Troy, Phthia, and Sparta. Troy may be a destroyed city, but it is presented heroically through Andromache's memories of Hector, and the cause of its destruction the strife caused by the goddesses, Athena in particular (see 1252), and by the lust of Paris. Phthia is technically linked with Sparta through Neoptolemus' marriage with Hermione, but his fruitful union is that with the captured Andromache, and at the end Thetis will make it clear that the ultimate survival of both Phthia and Troy will be ensured in the person of that child and his descendants. When Orestes reclaims Hermione, there is a real sense that these two deserve each other as both share in the unpleasant ethos of Sparta. Twice in the play we are reminded of Orestes' matricide (977–8, 1028–36), and twice he is called "the son of Clytemnestra" (884, 1115), hardly the sort of parentage one would boast about and indicative of one more failed union in the myth—see Philippo (1995) on the significance of patronymics. I would prefer (see Storey (1987)) to see this theme as turning on three houses or families, and there is a sense that a game of "musical unions" is taking place as partners realign in a more appropriate fashion.

We may also see *Andromache* as an early example of Euripides' forays into the world of the antihero. Along with his fondness for finding new versions of the mythical stories is his

casting the heroes of these stories in a new (and often unfavorable) light. Among his earlier plays perhaps the most noticeable examples would be the unsympathetic portrait of Jason in *Medea* and the redrawing of Hippolytus from the young innocent of a Potiphar's Wife narrative into a youth with an aversion to women and sex (see Swift on *Medea* and Ebbott on *Hippolytus* in this volume). Menelaus is no longer the hero from Homer, either the warrior with his moments of *aristeia* in the *Iliad* or the noble host of *Odyssey* 3–4, who welcomes Telemachus with the *xenia* due the son of a hero. Euripides' Menelaus is brutal and calculating, for whom petty revenge is everything and who will not stop at deceit, threats, and murder to preserve his family's honour. When at 645–61, he claims to be acting in the interests of Greece, it is clear that his arguments are based on a foundation of sand. And like all bullies, he falls to pieces at the arrival of a very elderly Peleus and then makes himself very scarce, abandoning the daughter he has supposedly been supporting. Orestes can easily be seen as the predecessor of the brilliantly antiheroic character that appears in *Electra* and the tormented soul in *Orestes*. In fact this Orestes possesses the subtlety and craftiness that the same character will lack in *Electra*. At 957–66 we learn that his presence in Phthia is no mere accident, as he pretends at first, but part of a cleverly worked out plan that he is now putting into action.

Euripides' most intriguing new creation is Hermione, for we learn much about her in her two scenes before us. She enters in splendour—notice her emphasis on gold and wealth and gifts, although she does try to contrast a "Greek city" with "Priam and his gold" (169). Her stereotyping of "the whole race of barbarians" at 170–6 is more comic than serious, since all of the offences that she attributes to barbarians are documented for Greek myths, indeed for Greek tragedy. For Hermione it is always someone else's fault (Andromache's at 158, her father's at 854–5, other women at 930 ff.), and in the debate with Andromache (147–268) she easily comes off the worse. She has earned the disapproval of the Chorus at 486–93, who claim her murder of Andromache and her son will be "godless, lawless, and thankless." Thus it is a surprise when at 825 she reappears in distress, repenting of what she has tried to do, and even threatening suicide. It is worth noting that her only sympathetic listener is the nurse and not the Chorus.

6 Staging *Andromache*

We often forget that the text in front of us in fact records a visual and physical performance. But through the work of critics such as Taplin (1978), Rehm (1992), and Wiles (1997) we have come increasingly to examine first how these plays might have been staged in ancient Athens and then how we might restage them today. The Theater of Dionysus employed what we call "theatre of the mind," with actors (three) wearing masks and taking more than one role, a minimum of scenery and special effects, and the spectators asked to do much mental work for themselves.

To begin with the assignment of roles, the fifthcentury theatre had three actors, of which the *protagonistēs* ("first actor") competed for a prize. *Andromache* is not the easiest of plays to ascertain who played what role, but it is reasonable that the first actor will have played the

title role, with other parts, such as the messenger—see Dickin (2009) here—aimed to strengthen his portfolio. On the assumption that a part was not shared by more than one actor (this works for every tragedy except *Oedipus at Colonus*), a reasonable division of the roles is: Actor 1—Andromache, Orestes, Messenger; Actor 2—Hermione, Menelaus, Thetis; Actor 3—Slavewoman, Peleus, Nurse. The part of the boy (505–36) was either ghosted by the Andromache actor (masked) or performed by a boy—several hundred boys had performed in the dithyrambic contests on the first day of the festival. The attendants for Menelaus and Peleus and the escort for the body of Neoptolemus will have been "silent faces."

The play is set in a real and isolated place, the Thetideion in Thessaly (location still unknown), where Peleus lived with his goddessbride Thetis "apart from mankind." Thus the *skēnē*building represents the house of Neoptolemus—Peleus his grandfather lives in the city of Pharsalus—where he dwells with his wife Hermione and his concubine Andromache (and their son). But somewhere in the playingarea is a shrine of Thetis, called variously "altar," "precinct," "shrine," "house" (see Lloyd 1994) 10). Two misconceptions about the layout of the playingarea (*orchēstra*) need to be addressed. First it is sometimes thought there was a raised stage before the *skēnē*building, the province of the actors, and second that the central point of the *orchēstra* (*thymelē*) had a working altar and was thus unavailable for stage action. Neither is likely to have been the case for the fifth century BCE. Actors and Chorus interact easily in the plays that we have (e.g., *Eumenides* or *Frogs*), and we have no need to imagine separate domains, nor is a raised stage very useful in a theater where most spectators sat *above* the playing area. If there was a working altar near the theater, it would have been down beside the temple of Dionysus, and theatrical critics have demonstrated that dramatically the prime playing area is the centre of the orchēstra. Thus Andromache's place of refuge will have been at the very centre of the playingarea.

Lloyd ((1994) 10) is correct to point out that this was not just an altar, but more properly a precinct. He imagines a freestanding structure in front of the *skēnē*building, on one side beside the alleged stage, while Stevens ((1971) 83) prefers an altar in an alcove of the *skēnē* building and Andromache sitting on steps in front. I would suggest a small but distinct precinct in the centre of the *orchēstra*, perhaps like that created in *Wasps* for the trial scene. This allows Andromache to occupy that crucial spot and when she leaves at 415 the visual impact will be substantial. At 859 Hermione will wonder to what divine image she should turn, thus perhaps pointedly rejecting the place where Andromache had taken refuge before. When Peleus collapses at 1225, it would be hard to resist having him fall before the statue of his goddesswife.

It has become customary to regard the *eisodoi* on either side as possessing consistent identities, "local" and "distant," and while there is no firm evidence for this convention in fifthcentury tragedy, it does work very well for many plays. For Andromache the local *eisodos*, that to the spectators' right (or stage left) will lead to Pharsalus, and it is through here that the slavewoman exits at 90 and Peleus enters at 547. The distant *eisodos*, to the spectators' left (or stage right), leads principally to Delphi or Sparta, through which Menelaus departs at 747 and Orestes arrives at 881. The third entry is through the doors of the *skēnē* building and in some tragedies (*Oresteia*) will have an enormous importance. In *Andromache*

this entrance is prominent in the first part of the play and seems to be controlled by foreigners, Hermione and her father Menelaus. In the crucial scene with Orestes, Hermione will enter in distress from the house (the last use of that entrance), but leave with Orestes through the distant *eisodos* at 1008. Significantly both of the women in Neoptolemus' house will leave that house never to return, and Peleus himself will abandon the mortal dwelling where he lived with Thetis and be relocated with her in her father's house. The staging can contribute significantly to the larger interpretation, witness the importance of the door in *Agamemnon* or the theme of characters touching in *Suppliant Women*. In *Andromache* the door is crucial to the first scene and then is abandoned and ignored by all thereafter. A modern director would be tempted to leave that door open and unattended at the end.

The final method of entry is that of Thetis at 1226, significantly on a cue of despair from Peleus ("daughter of Nereus, in your gloomy cave you will witness me falling, totally destroyed"). Gods at the end of a drama usually appear above (note "travelling through the bright sky"—1228–9), and the mention of motion implies strongly that Thetis is appearing on the *mēchanē*. "Stepping onto" suggests also that she leaves her conveyance, either onto the *theologeion* or (less likely) onto the floor of the playing area. Since the actual reunion of hero and goddess lies in the future, it seems more probable that they remain separated by distance and level.

Does Andromache (with her son) reappear at the end of the drama? Some have been bothered by the departure of the title character at line 765 and have sought to achieve some unity by having her as part of the final scene with Peleus. The Andromacheactor admittedly will be playing the messenger (or perhaps Thetis), but for some it will be reassuring to see Andromache and her son there for the final pronouncements of Thetis, which do affect them (1243–52). *Tonde* may not be as strong a deictic as *tondi*, which does indicate someone visible to the spectators, but at 1239 Thetis does use *tond'* of Neoptolemus' visible corpse, and then at 1246 *tonde* of Andromache's son. Allan ((2000) 74–6) argues well the case for their appearance as "silent faces," while Mastronarde ((1979) 100–1) argues eloquently against. The matter is complicated at 1041 when the Chorus declare, "sorrowful griefs have not fallen only on you (s.)." Both Hermione and Andromache have been suggested as the addressee, the latter more likely in view of the emphasis on the woes of Greece at 1044–6, and might suggest that Andromache and her son were visible as part of the entourage that will enter at 1047. But such a choral address to an entering character during the stasimon is without parallel, and one must remain sceptical.

7 Final Thoughts

The third question faced by the critics is the success or failure of the drama. Earlier scholars found *Andromache* disappointing, e.g. Lucas ((1959) 182) "the play falls feebly and mysteriously to pieces." But despite falling into three distinct movements, there is a unity in the repeated motif of the character in distress, expressing their despair, and then experiencing an unexpected rescue. The transitions between Andromache, Hermione, and Peleus are cleverly handled and ultimately convincing. We have been spoiled by tragedies built around a single figure, and even a play like *Hippolytus*, described in the hypothesis as "one of the best," really

has four interacting figures, of whom the most sympathetic, Phaedra, has the fewest lines. Thematically, if we seek a common connection between these three movements, we can find it in the theme of marital disaster or unnatural unions and the rectification of those broken unions with more proper relationships. This does not mean that we must sympathize with, for example, Orestes and Hermione, but we do realize that these two belong together. Sparta and its ruthless social *mores* will not go away, and since this is wartime, we can understand the hint of propaganda. Since this is a play by Euripides, we should not expect neat and happy endings. The divine order is confused, and taking Thetis as a benevolent deity, as I think on balance we must, does not erase the despicable conduct of Apollo or the doubts that the messenger and the Chorus have about his behaviour. While I would not go as far as Kyriakou ((2005) 25) in seeing *Andromache* as "the bleakest and most numbing" of Euripides' tragedies, this is Euripides, after all, and his plays do end with more questions than answers.

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FURTHER READING

The primary texts and commentaries are those of Stevens (1971) and Lloyd (1994). Monographs in English devoted to *Andromache* are those by Kovacs (1980), a reading and interpretation; by van der Valk (1985), on the meaning of the play and possible contemporary references; and, most thorough of all, Allan (2000). Conacher (1967) remains an admirable introduction to Euripides' adaptation of the traditional myth and its implication for understanding the play.

CHAPTER 10
Hecuba

Daniel Turkeltaub

Perhaps no play exhibits Euripides' fascination with the suffering of the powerless, particularly that of women and children whose male protectors are dead, absent, or negligent, in quite so concentrated a form as *Hecuba*. Its opening assaults the audience's eyes with a murdered boy's ghost, an anthropomorphic icon of the miseries to follow. The ghost identifies himself as Polydorus, the youngest son of Hecuba and Priam, and recounts how Troy was destroyed, his father slaughtered, he himself murdered by the guestfriend entrusted with protecting him, and his corpse thrown unceremoniously into the sea. After introducing enough pain for its own tragedy, Polydorus reveals that his sister, Polyxena, will be sacrificed that day over Achilles' grave. In the course of his speech, Polydorus introduces *Hecuba*'s eponymous heroine, whose role is to suffer from these atrocities. Hecuba has already been haunted by Polydorus's phantasm for three days and will soon see the corpses of her two children lying before her. Polydorus presents Hecuba as entirely passive, and she effectively is for most of the play. She tries to save Polyxena, but her attempts only reassert her powerlessness to avert the devastating consequences that her family suffers because others pervert fundamental Greek ethical structures for their own benefit. In the end, the only effective action open to her is to requite Polymestor, the guestfriend who murdered Polydorus, through perverting societal structures herself. Hecuba hides behind traditional gender roles and the guestfriendship joining her to Polymestor in order to trick him into trusting her so that she can avenge her son, and she colludes with Agamemnon so as to predetermine his verdict when Polymestor summons him to judge her actions. Hecuba escapes legal punishment, but neither she nor Agamemnon will escape Polymestor's prophecy that Agamemnon's wife will kill him and that Hecuba will plunge to her death in the sea after metamorphozing into a dog.

1 *Hecuba*'s Historical Context and Reception

Hecuba uses its atrocities to engage its audience in a discussion about contemporary sociopolitical anxieties concerning ethical objectivity, which the Peloponnesian War had exacerbated (on political aspects of Euripides' plays, see also Goslin in this volume). Though we have no firm evidence for *Hecuba*'s date, metrical trends and two allusions in Aristophanes' extant *Clouds* suggest that it was performed in approximately 424 BCE. Thucydides describes Greece at this point as dominated by a selfperpetuating environment in which people pursued their desires for power through acts so heinous that what had previously been considered absolute truths about morality, justice, virtue, divinity, and even language itself came into doubt, and this doubt in turn propagated further invidious behavior (3.82–84). Athenians faced challenges to traditional wisdom on the Pnyx when deciding how to treat their allies and conquered enemies, in the agora from interrogations by Socrates and his followers

that questioned the validity of Athens' traditional moral and ethical axioms, and from students of Protagoras and Gorgias who learned, distorted, practiced, and promulgated a rhetoric grounded in ontological subjectivism. Much of *Hecuba*'s original audience must themselves have yearned for the same ethical constancy Hecuba craves as the societal structures that had once provided her a sense of security are perverted under the pressures of human appetites and fears.

Hecuba's intense suffering and sensational violence helped it become the most popular Euripidean tragedy throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance. As the first play in the Byzantine triad, *Hecuba* was read and translated more often than any other Greek play during these periods, and was also the earliest to be performed (in 1506 or 1514 CE). But the aesthetic shift of the seventeenth century caused *Hecuba* to fall into disrepute. Enlightenment critics decried both its intense suffering and apparent lack of any causal link joining the Polyxena and Polydorusstorylines. They felt *Hecuba* consequently had an unAristotelian, disunified structure that dispersed the audience's emotional engagement too broadly to be effective (Heath (1987)). Even when *Hecuba* began to regain some of its lost favor in the 1980s, these two concerns remained implicit behind the three main issues that the majority of recent (and more laudatory) treatments of the play address either directly or indirectly: the relationship between the two plots, the role of the gods, and the play's ethical stance on Hecuba's revenge.

These three issues interweave so that discussion of one necessarily entails the other two. Because *Hecuba*'s binary structure sets the foundational mechanisms of its imagined world, we will begin with its structure, which will lead us through an examination of its divine machinery to its moral ontology and then to how that ontology affects the play's structure down to the most fundamental level. Interpretations of the play range from condemning Hecuba for falling into utter reprobacy to lauding her for sublimating herself as a champion of justice. Neither reading, however, is entirely satisfying. I will try to offer a third option while keeping an eye on the two established readings.

2 *Hecuba*'s Binary Structure

There is no obvious reason why *Hecuba*'s two plotlines should coincide in the same play other than that they each concern the postwar death of one of Hecuba's children. While the Polydorusplot naturally occurs on the Chersonese during the Greeks' voyage home, the Polyxenaplot belongs on the Troad soon after they sack Troy, where and when Euripides situates it in *Trojan Women*. Because no evidence for Polymestor exists prior to *Hecuba* and the only earlier account of Polydorus has him killed by Achilles in the war (Homer *Iliad* 20.407–418), several scholars have hypothesized that Euripides either adapted a Thracian myth previously unknown in Athens (e.g., Delebecque (1951) 154–159, della Corte (1962), Pohlenz (1954) 277–278, and Conacher (1961) 6–8) or invented the entire Polydorusplot himself (e.g., McDermott (1990) 130–131). In either case, Euripides readily could have situated *Hecuba* on the Troad and had the waves carry Polydorus's body across the Hellespont like some message in a bottle, a theme he would later employ in *Palamedes*, without deviating

from a familiar mythic tradition (not that he worries about doing so elsewhere). His decision to situate the play instead on the Chersonese requires an awkward displacement of Achilles' tomb from its traditional location on the Troad that in and of itself prioritizes the Polydorus plot over the Polyxenaplot.

Polydorus clarifies the hierarchical relationship between the two plots in his opening monologue, which he focuses on his own death and burial. He does discuss Polyxena's impending sacrifice, but presents it as the reason why the Greeks remain on the Chersonese long enough for his own story to run its course. They remain "because" (*gar*, 37) the ghost of Achilles held them back with his demands for Polyxena as an honorprize. After pausing just long enough to foretell her death later that day (43–44), Polydorus uses the consequence that his mother will see both of her children's corpses as a bridge back to his own body's discovery and burial (45–46). However much selfinterest shapes Polydorus's rhetoric, his characterization of Polyxena's sacrifice remains nonetheless programmatic. Her death should be considered a practical, albeit incidental, prerequisite for the completion of the Polydorus plot. The remainder of the play suppresses this hierarchical relationship so that the audience's experience may be focalized through Hecuba, but the fact that the servant only discovers Polydorus's body because she goes to the shore to fetch water for Polyxena's funereal cleansing reasserts the hierarchy (and makes Polyxena's death doubly prerequisite for the completion of Polydorus's story).

Polyxena's plot is also subordinated to Polydorus's plot in that her death causes Hecuba to lose the same number of children during the play as she murders while avenging Polydorus. Most modern treatments consider Hecuba's revenge excessive and therefore symptomatic of a moral collapse. That she murders two innocent children to avenge one has seemed particularly egregious, but Judith Mossman ((1995) 188) notes that retribution could be acceptable in Greek society and that "killing the children of one's enemy . . . was not unusual or unGreek." She concludes: "Hecuba has been deprived of her last child . . . for the punishment to be commensurate Polymestor must be deprived of his" (Mossman (1995) 189). While Mossman is correct that Hecuba's retribution matches Polymestor's crime in rendering him childless just as he left her, the murder of two children to avenge one still leaves a blatant numerical imbalance that Polyxena's death alleviates.

Hecuba's language and staging help the audience perceive the balance between the two sets of children by pairing them as mirroring doublets (on doubling, see Zeitlin (1996) 191–200). For Polydorus and Polyxena, the assimilation starts with their compound names, which begin with the same element, evoke epithets of Hades (Zeitlin (1996) 172), and are semantically contiguous (MitchellBoyask (1993) 124). The second element of "Polyxena" pertains to the guesthost friendship (*xenia*) that Polymestor violates in killing Polydorus. As a neuter substantive adjective it signifies gifts, normally *dôra* as in Polydorus, given to confirm a guesthost friendship. References to Polyxena and Polydorus as a paired set (45, 896–897, 1287) unify them, while the shrouding of their corpses renders them so indistinguishable that Hecuba and Polymestor both mistake Polydorus's body for Polyxena's. Anonymity unifies Polymestor's children through making them similarly indistinguishable. Hecuba unwittingly draws the parallel between the two pairs herself when it becomes most relevant. Her

pronouncement to the Chorus (and audience) about Polymestor's children, "you will see (*opsêi*) the bodies of double children (*paidôn . . . dissôn*)" (1049–1051), recalls both her own "double (*dissê*) mourning" (896) and Polydorus's earlier prediction that his mother "will see (*katopsetai*) two corpses of [her own] two children (*duoin … paidoin*)" (45).

Polydorus thus foreshadows in his opening monologue the necessary role Polyxena's death plays in the completion of his own story, including how her death fosters a sense of balance between the two sets of slain children. Moreover, he gives the impression that this balance has been arranged by the gods when he says that his sister's death is predetermined (43–44). Understanding the play's bipartite structure therefore requires understanding what roles the gods play in *Hecuba*, to which we now turn.

3 *Hecuba*'s Divine Machinery

The divine machinery in *Hecuba* is notoriously obscure. Euripides normally assigns the speeches that open his plays and the prophecies at their ends to gods, but here they are delivered by the ghost of Polydorus and Polymestor respectively (though Polymestor does learn his prophecy from "the prophetic Dionysus" (1267), on whom, see Schlesier (1988) and Zeitlin (1996)). Hecuba brings the question of divine beneficence to the fore when she wonders where there is a god who would help her (162–163), and Talthybius generalizes her question into one of divine awareness when her wretchedness stirs him to wonder whether Zeus even sees human affairs or whether his reputation is empty and fortune (*tukhê*) in fact oversees things (488–491). Talthybius's question resonates throughout the tragedy.

Some scholars, David Kovacs (1987) in particular, argue that Olympian gods guide *Hecuba*'s events to a just end by stopping the winds so that Hecuba has the time she needs to exact vengeance on Polymestor. Even though in later accounts Achilles stops the winds in order to force the Greeks to sacrifice Polyxena, Kovacs maintains that Achilles does not do so in *Hecuba* on the grounds that only gods control the winds in other Greek tragedies and because *Hecuba* provides no indication that the winds prevent the Greeks from leaving until Hecuba asks Agamemnon whether she has time to avenge Polydorus, well after Polyxena has been sacrificed. Yet, even if we cannot glean from later accounts of the myth what preconceptions the audience might have brought to *Hecuba*, it nonetheless would not be too much of a stretch to presume that Achilles may influence the winds from the fact that he had received worship since the sixth century BCE from sailors hoping for safe voyages on the north and east coasts of the Black Sea (Hedreen (1991)). While the timing of the revelation that the winds prevent the Greeks from leaving could point to divine intervention on Hecuba's behalf, as Kovacs argues, Agamemnon words his explanation carefully so as to discourage such an interpretation: "Now, since a god is not sending (*ou gar hiês*') favorable winds, it is necessary to wait watching the fleet sit idle" (900–901). Agamemnon blames the absence of winds not on divine intervention but on divine inactivity, which if anything would evince the gods' absence or lack of involvement. When Agamemnon remarks at the play's end that a favorable wind has begun to blow (1289–1290), he does not mention gods at all, leaving the audience to wonder whether this wind should be attributed to Achilles, to divine action now that *Hecuba* has run its course,

or to chance, as Talthybius suggests (see MitchellBoyask (1993) for different rebuttal).

Underworld deities seem to maintain a far more immediate and effective presence than the Olympian gods do. This impression is fostered in part by the Hadean atmosphere that arises from the echoes of Hades' epithets in the names Polydorus, Polyxena, and Polymestor; the two ghosts; the descriptions of the Chersonese and Agamemnon's tent in terms evocative of the underworld; and other such touches throughout the play (Zeitlin (1996) 172–173). The resulting sense of the underworld's presence both makes its deities seem closer and further distances the Olympian gods in accordance with the cosmological precept Polydorus establishes in the play's very first sentence when he describes the underworld as "where Hades dwells away from the gods" (2). Yet even still the Hadean atmosphere only enhances the ominous character of human decisions rather than suggests that that underworld gods actively intervene, since all events pertinent to the forces of the underworld in this play operate exclusively through human channels and originate in human appetites. It is Polydorus's desire for burial that instigates whatever "the strong below" (49) do for him, and the phrasing of his request "to acquire a tomb" (50) suggests that they do nothing more than permit him to arrange matters himself (cf. Eustathius *ad Iliadem* 1.507). *Hecuba* invites its audience to infer that "the strong below" gave Achilles similar license to correct what he perceives as the Greeks' failure to honor him satisfactorily; Odysseus imagines the implicit half of just such a scenario when he argues that Polyxena must be sacrificed so that none of the dead can complain "while standing next to Persephone" (136–137) that the Greeks do not appreciate their fallen comrades properly.

Some scholars (for instance, Erbse (1984) 59n16, Nussbaum (1986) 416, and Gregory (1991) 110–111 and (1999) xxxv) interpret Hecuba's transformation into a dog as a sign that an Erinys works through her (cf. 1078) because the Erinyes are characterized as hunting dogs in Aeschylus's *Eumenides* and because Erinyes sometimes operate in tragedy through human agents who assume aspects of their godhead literally, metaphorically, or in dreams. Additionally, both Hecuba and the Chorus associate their misery with Alastores, spirits of vengeance closely aligned with Erinyes who drive the cycles of misery afflicting cursed houses and whom victims of oathbreakers and murderers may invoke even posthumously to punish their malefactors. Hecuba speaks of having learned of her woes from an Alastor (686) when she first sees her son's corpse. Later, the Chorus ends the third stasimon by calling Paris's seduction of Helen "a woe from an Alastor" (949). This passage recalls the second stasimon, whose primary theme is the origin of Troy's "cycling" (640) miseries in the judgment of Paris and his expedition to seduce Helen. Because the Chorus sings the third stasimon in response to Hecuba's plan for revenge and the second stasimon in response to Polyxena's death and the pain it causes Hecuba, the echo between the two songs incorporates both the Polyxenaplot and Polydorusplot into the same cycle of events that led to the fall of Troy and attributes that cycle to an Alastor. In each case, however, the Erinys or Alastor appears solely because an observer—whether a character or audience member—first redefines horrific human actions as signs of some superhuman agent and then coordinates those signs into a comprehensible structure that aggrandizes them to a cosmic scale so that those who suffer can justify their miseries as contributing to a larger order. *Hecuba* offers no objective signs of

Erinyes or Alastores.

All this does not mean that *Hecuba* precludes the possibility that the gods intervene in its events. Rather, this play is all but unique among Euripides' extant works in that it avoids miracles and divine epiphanies, empowers none of its characters with any awareness of the gods greater than the audience themselves had in their own lives, and then in such an environment focalizes everything through its protagonist so meticulously—it has even been proposed that Polydorus's opening speech is Hecuba's dream (Jouanna (1982) 45–46)—that the divine is completely inscrutable (see Segal 1989). Even Polydorus, whose knowledge extends beyond everyone else's, including the audience's, cannot say anything more specific than that "someone of the gods" (58) ruins Hecuba. Such platitude reveals that he has no greater awareness of the divine than the other characters do. Even his declaration that Polyxena's fate is already determined is entirely explicable in human terms: the audience will soon learn that the Greeks have already voted to sacrifice Polyxena to Achilles. Without any discernable divine presence, the notion of a just universe suggested by the balance so carefully established between the two sets of children can only be said to exist in the minds of those who connect linguistic and visual markers for themselves so as to imagine a cosmic order that allows them to rationalize the horror of Polyxena's death.

4 *Hecuba*'s Moral Ontology

If, despite the absence of a divine presence, we persist in construing the winds or the balance between the murdered children as evidence of a just cosmic order, Hecuba's own hypocrisy nonetheless dismantles any viable possibility of justice. By fostering the impression that the infanticides balance, the bipartite superstructure aligns Polyxena's sacrifice with the deaths of Polymestor's children in a way that draws attention to Hecuba's moral contradictions. While trying to save her daughter, Hecuba claims to argue "justly" (*tôi . . . dikaiôi*, 271) that Achilles does not act "justly" (*endikôs*, 263) by demanding Polyxena's life rather than Helen's because Polyxena has never harmed Achilles whereas Helen is ultimately responsible for his death. Hecuba herein establishes the precept that it is unjust to punish one party to requite a wrong for which another is responsible. Yet if we see the paired children as balancing each other, then Hecuba violates her own precept when she kills Polymestor's second child to avenge Polyxena, whom the Greeks kill. An even more egregious contradiction arises from Hecuba's argument that she should be sacrificed to Achilles instead of Polyxena because she is the mother of Paris, who killed Achilles (383–388). If it is unjust to kill children because of things their parents do, then killing Polymestor's sons for his crimes cannot be just. The audience is left with four options: (1) that both Hecuba's revenge and Polyxena's death are unjust, in which case they speak against the possibility of an overarching moral order, (2) that they are both just, in which case justice devolves into a license for outraged individuals to hurt in turn whomever they can or want, (3) that despite these contradictions Hecuba's revenge is still just but Polyxena's death is not, in which case the relativity of justice precludes an absolute moral order, or (4) that justice itself does not actually exist. Hecuba's search for a concept of justice at best proves the object of her quest impossible and at worst collapses the difference between

justice and injustice.

While this disassembling of justice occurs on the level of the superstructure above Hecuba's awareness, the arguments with which she tries to persuade first Odysseus to prevent Polyxena from being sacrificed and then Agamemnon to help her avenge Polydorus continue to rely on paired ethical tenets that are fundamental to Athenian moral systems: gratitude/reciprocity (*kharis*) and friendship (*philia*), proper reverence for the gods and justice, shame/respect and pity, and behavioral/legal code (*nomos*) and equality (*isotês*). For much of the play Hecuba treats these tenets as universal and absolute, as forming a human commonality that transcends differences in ethnicity, gender, or status and to which even the gods adhere (Lanza (1986) 439). These tenets should, for that reason, compel Odysseus and Agamemnon to help her. Hecuba outlines her conception of them when she appeals to Agamemnon based on *nomos* and equality (*isotês*):

But the gods are strong, and ruling over them

is *nomos*: for by *nomos* we believe in the gods

and live distinguishing unjust and just deeds;

if it, after coming up to you, is ruined,

and they are not punished who kill

their friends or dare to steal holy offerings to the gods,

then nothing of human matters is equal (*ison*).

(799–805)

Hecuba herein alludes to the Athenian principle that all citizens have equal legal rights (*isonomia*) and expands it into a general equality grounded in the notion that all people and gods assess just and unjust actions in accordance with a universally applicable behavioral code/law (*nomos*). There has been much scholarly debate over whether Hecuba uses the term *nomos* in this passage to mean "human convention" or "divine law" (see in particular Vellacott (1975), Lanza (1986), Nussbaum (1986) 400–401, and Gregory (1999) 138–139), but her imprecision here and earlier results from the fact that she does not yet perceive a difference between the two. She previously used the same notion of *nomos* as the capstone to her attempt to persuade Odysseus to save Polyxena: "a behavioral code/law (*nomos*) concerning blood, one equal (*isos*) for free people and slaves, lays upon you" (291–292). The anachronism maps her attempt to extend equality under the law (*isonomia*) beyond its narrow parameters in Athenian society onto contemporary Athenian philosophical and political discourse, and, in particular, onto the question of whether its fundamental concepts pertain to Athens' subject cities, defeated enemies, and rebellious allies.

But, as Hecuba's persuasive goals force her to say, the very need to make this argument reveals that the exercise of *nomos* here—she says even its very existence—depends entirely upon Agamemnon's decision. In other words, regardless of what she believes or wants Agamemnon to believe, her plea forces her to treat *nomos* as a social contract that can be dissolved by

human action, not as a cosmic law enforced by the gods. Hecuba legitimately can say "by *nomos* we believe in the gods" because when everybody abides by *nomos*, and particularly when the gods do, the resulting justice points to a divine plan that ensures justice, and, hence, to evidence of the gods' existence. Without such justice, however, there is no basis for believing that the gods work towards justice and therefore no highest authority whom the weak can invoke to persuade those stronger than themselves to act justly. That function falls upon human authorities such as the voting assembly and king, but, being human, these authorities are subject to pressures and drives that can compromise their ability or desire to behave justly. So while the ethical tenets on which Hecuba bases her appeals may define moral behavior, they cannot be relied upon to guarantee it, as the action of the play demonstrates to its audience and eventually teaches Hecuba.

5 The Ethical Positions of Hecuba's Principal Characters

Each of Hecuba's three "antagonists" exemplifies a different aspect of the problem. As an autocratic ruler, Polymestor does not answer to any human authority and characterizes himself as apostate through his belief that the gods cause confusion "so that we in our ignorance worship them" (959–960). Without any higher power to check his behavior, his greed has free rein. He protected Polydorus so long as Troy stood because it was advantageous for him to preserve his guestfriendship with Priam. As soon as Troy's destruction made it potentially disadvantageous for him to continue harboring Polydorus, however, he murdered the boy in order to steal the gold intended for rebuilding Troy. Hecuba tricks him into proving that greed governs him when she lures him into her tent with promises of further treasure, and he himself readily admits that he is motivated solely by personal advantage when he tries to exculpate himself before Agamemnon: his argument relies on the hope that he can fool Agamemnon into believing that he acted out of goodwill (*philia*) for the Greeks because his deeds happen to benefit them as well. His despicable example is extended over the entire play by the subordination of the Polyxenaplot to the Polydorusplot so that it provides a point of comparison against which to evaluate Odysseus and Agamemnon.

Odysseus inhabits a very different social framework. The Greek army mirrors the Athenian Assembly in its politics: the soldiery listens to orators debate and then votes upon what course of action it will undertake. Because whatever power Odysseus wields resides entirely in his ability to persuade the masses, he uses the debate over Polyxena's sacrifice as an opportunity to curry favor by stoking the soldiery's emotions and feeding their appetites. He inflames their sense of power by telling them that they should not hesitate to kill slaves, incites their fear that "a certain one . . . of the dead" (136–137) might complain about them to the dreaded Queen of the Underworld, implicitly lauds them for acting honorably (134–140) if they vote to honor Achilles out of gratitude (*kharis*), tempts them to do so with the promise of their own posthumous glory (313–319), and uses these rhetorical maneuvers to persuade them to indulge rather than suppress their passions. Odysseus operates, in other words, as a demagogue. Thus the Chorus introduces him to the audience as "the intricateminded, prattling, glibtongued,

mobpandering son of Laertes" (131–133), and Hecuba accuses him of craving the "honors of publicspeakers" (254–255) so much that he is ready to disregard both the debt of gratitude (*kharis*) he owes Hecuba (254) and his friendship (*philia*) with her (256) if doing so would enable him to please the soldiery. Her assessment reveals that an insatiable desire for honor and political status, which the citizenry bestows in a democracy, compels Odysseus to do and say whatever will most effectively seduce the soldiers into following him. His power is therefore illusory, since his ambition leaves him only the freedom to act in ways that will please the soldiery. The ethical tenets upon which Hecuba relies have no force against such compulsions because their implementation would deprive the soldiery of their pleasure and so Odysseus of his power.

Agamemnon is in key ways the antithesis of Odysseus. Where ambition drives Odysseus to disregard without hesitation his debt of gratitude to and frienship with Hecuba, Agamemnon pities her (851) and gladly offers to emancipate her (754–755), he abhors Polymestor's acts as heinous crimes against justice and proper reverence for the gods (852–853), and he urged the Greeks to control themselves and not sacrifice Polyxena out of a sense of reciprocity (*kharis*) for his relationship with Cassandra (120–122). Agamemnon wants to abide by these tenets and help Hecuba, but his political situation impedes even him from opposing the will of the soldiery. The army considers Polymestor an ally (*philios*) and Polydorus an enemy (858–860). Agamemnon will not even try to persuade them otherwise for reasons he explains to Hecuba in language that, through its polysemy, unifies two actions into a single concept: "you have in me somebody who wants to labor with you and is keen to help, but is slow since it will put me at odds with the Achaeans (*Akhaiois ei diablêthêsomai*)" (861–863). The last clause also means "since, in the Achaeans' eyes, I will be calumniated." Being undeservedly disgraced is, for Agamemnon, not simply the inevitable result of voicing an opinion that opposes the preconceptions held by the Achaean masses, the two actions are inseparable, simultaneous, and identical. Speaking on Hecuba's behalf would constitute a loss of status that would render him unable to carry a vote and so effectively deprive him of his political power. Fearing this outcome and having already failed to persuade the soldiers to spare Polyxena, he declines to support a cause openly that he knows is futile and that would subvert the sovereign will of the soldiery.

Agamemnon's reluctance to help Hecuba despite both his desire to do so and traditional role as the army's autocratic leader spurs Hecuba to reconsider her experience and realize that the behaviors of Polymestor, Odysseus, and Agamemnon are all symptomatic of a single underlying phenomenon intrinsic to the human condition:

There is no one of mortals who is free;

for either he is a slave to wealth or chance (*tukhê*),

or the very crowd of the city or writings of *nomoi*

constrain him from acting in accordance with his intention.

(864–867)

Mortals are not subservient to a transcendent *nomos*, she realizes, nor to gods, but rather to immediate environmental factors, some determined by their society, some by chance (*tukhê*), that govern their behavior by working upon their emotions and appetites. Hecuba draws upon her experience to develop a typology of four overlapping classes, each of which reflects a particular character or set of characters in the play. Polymestor is clearly a "slave to wealth." The Chorus and Hecuba are presented as slaves to chance (*tukhê*); Hecuba herein answers Talthybius's question about whether Zeus or chance (also *tukhê*, 491) oversees human affairs. And we have seen how the crowd controls Odysseus and Agamemnon.

Most interesting, however, is the last group, whom "writings of *nomoi*" prevent from acting as they want. Up to this point, Hecuba has steadfastly presented *nomos* (behavioral or legal code) as a singular, fundamental, and universal principle of just social behavior, but here she replaces that concept with multiple written *nomoi*. The concept of written laws may be yet another anachronistic nod to fifthcentury Athens, but it is also relevant to Hecuba's experience because she and Agamemnon find themselves at the mercy of *nomoi* that, though not written, are nonetheless delimited by the fixed set of linguistic markers through which they are implemented. The Chorus epitomizes her appeal to Agamemnon as follows (847–849): "*nomoi* determine necessities, establishing the worst enemies as allies (*philous*) and making former friends enemies (*ekhthrous*)." Even though the universal *nomos* distinguishing just and unjust behavior that Hecuba posits calls for reassigning the markers "ally" and "enemy" in consideration of Polymestor's crimes, Agamemnon must reluctantly reject her appeal because the army has already labeled Polydorus an "enemy" (*ekhthros*, 859) and Polymestor an "ally" (*philion*, 858). These labels, Agamemnon implies, are intractable for the moment.

The rigidity in "writings of *nomoi*" also defies higher, "nonwritten" notions of *nomos* by empowering whoever can best manipulate the linguistic markers in which society "inscribes" its *nomoi*. Odysseus uses such manipulations in replying to Hecuba: he may owe Hecuba gratitude (*kharis*) and friendship (*philia*), he may even pity her, but that does not mean he owes Polyxena anything; regardless, these same tenets demand that he kill Polyxena to fulfill more important obligations to Achilles, the Greek army, and the mothers and widows of the slain Greek soldiers (301–325). His maneuver is sophistic in both its methods and intent, as the Chorus (131–132) and Hecuba (258) anticipate. Being characterized as a sophist would have villainized Odysseus in the eyes of most Athenians, but, more importantly, it attributes to him a specialized, albeit potentially specious, knowledge of ethics that he, as a sophist, would seek to promulgate. He adopts the stance of a sophistic teacher when he begins his response by bidding Hecuba "be taught!" (299). Through this stance, he claims authority over the definitions of the very terms she made the cornerstones of her speech, asserts that she and her fellow "barbarians" (328) do not understand the true natures of reciprocity and friendship, and then instructs her in how to implement those tenets properly. Proper *nomos*, he informs her in his conclusion, is a product of knowledge: the Greeks will "pay for their ignorance" if they "wrongly hold it as their *nomos*" (*nomizomen*) to honor the noble dead (326–327).

Without any higher, unwritten *nomos* as a touchstone, Odysseus measures the value of *nomoi* purely by the material benefits accrued from them. Honoring the dead is a good *nomos*, he argues, because Greece prospers (330–331) when the sight of the honored dead encourages the

living to fight bravely (313–316). He hopes that the barbarians will in contrast continue disregarding their dead so that they may fare "similarly to their resolutions" (331). But neither Hecuba nor the Chorus fully understands him. The Chorus attributes Hecuba's inability to persuade Odysseus to the fact that "the servile . . . endure what they ought not, since they are overmastered by force" (332–333); Hecuba bids Polyxena to supplicate Odysseus because the fact that he has a son may give Polyxena "some greater power" (336) than her mother has to arouse genuine pity in Odysseus (339 and 341). Hecuba herein clings to a transcendent "equal *nomos*" in the hope that it will enable Polyxena to compel Odysseus to recognize a basic commonality between herself and his own son. While Hecuba and the Chorus are correct that Odysseus can ignore Hecuba's pleas and abuse her with impunity because he has more power than they do, they do not yet realize that it is his understanding of "the writings of *nomoi*" that enables him to perceive how powerless her appeals truly are and to wield power himself by cajoling the soldiery with promises of gratification while still convincing them that they are acting justly.

By operating in this way, Odysseus subverts and usurps the power that the idea of a transcendent ethical order holds over its believers so that their very belief in morality becomes a medium for manipulating them. Odysseus's response to Hecuba not only rebuffs her appeals, it also serves the purpose of convincing Polyxena to offer herself willingly for sacrifice (on maiden sacrifice in Euripides, see also Goslin and Torrance in this volume). Most scholars concur that Polyxena is the most, some would say the only, laudable figure in *Hecuba*, and this assessment is well deserved. The surfeit of praise other characters heap upon her for her noble preference of death to slavery and her heroic deportment during her sacrifice provides an internal model for how the audience should view her. But her heroism arises from a naively idealistic conception of nobility born from the "noble expectations" (351) under which she was raised. Thus the Chorus, as Matthiessen (2008, 115) notes, combines positive and negative senses of the word *deinos*, which means both "awesome" and "terrifying" or even "dangerous," when they remark upon the "*deinos* stamp" (379–381) Polyxena bears from her noble birth, while Hecuba both informs Polyxena that her nobility causes grief and attempts to disabuse her of the idealistic vision of nobility that motivates her when she tells her daughter "you spoke nobly, but there is pain at hand for the noble" (382–383). Odysseus's romanticization of the heroic ethos into a quest for posthumous honor glamorizes death in such a way that it appeals to Polyxena's naïve vision of nobility and her longing to be revered again just as the Trojans used to revere her before Troy was sacked, that is, "equal to the gods" (*isê theoisi*, 356). Homer frequently uses this same expression to glorify his heroes. By stating that heroic deaths such as Achilles' deserve reverence, Odysseus aligns Polyxena's longing to be revered as equal to a god, to receive the same reverence Homeric heroes receive, with being sacrificed to Achilles. He thus anticipates her selfimposed transformation via simile into a cultic statue (*agalma*) during her sacrifice. Polyxena reveals Odysseus's influence through her explanation that she wants to die in order to avoid appearing "lifeloving" (*philopsukhos*, 348). She adopts this extremely rare word together with its underlying philosophy directly from Odysseus's argument that the soldiery will become "lifeloving" (*philopsukhêsomen*, 315) unless Achilles is honored. Odysseus's manipulation does not obviate Polyxena's virtues but, by calling into question the legitimacy of her motivation, it does make it difficult to

associate them with any sense of higher good.

Polyxena's virtues could still have value on a personal level if they enable her to achieve her purposes, but *Hecuba* suggests that they do not. Her hope that death will be preferable to slavery seems to be yet another aspect of her naïve fantasy about nobility, an ember of Sophocleanstyle heroism that Odysseus has fanned. Katherine King (1985) discusses the important resemblances *Hecuba*'s characters bear to their Iliadic selves, but numerous overlaps in both theme and character make the encounter between Odysseus and Achilles' shade in the *Odyssey* at least as pertinent. There, Odysseus praises Achilles for having been honored while alive "equally to the gods" (*isa theoisin*, 11.484)—a phrase we have seen Polyxena echo with nostalgia—and surmises that he must now rule the dead. Achilles' response, that he would prefer to labor for the poorest farmer than rule the dead, shatters the simplistic beauty of Polyxena's fantasy that death brings a freedom preferable to slavery. It cannot even be said that by embracing death Polyxena manages to emancipate herself in order to die free because whatever freedom she appears to have during the sacrifice is at worst an illusion concealing Odysseus's control over her and at best, as Charles Segal ((1990) 316, cf. (1990b) 113–119) writes, "paradoxical, resting . . . on female submission to male violence." Many scholars share Segal's interpretation (e.g., Thalmann (1993) 146–148).

Polyxena's virtues do not even prove relevant to attaining the posthumous honors Odysseus describes and that her nostalgia for her former life and deportment during her sacrifice suggest she desires. Even before their funeral, Polyxena's body, the corpse of ostensibly the most virtuous character in *Hecuba*, is rendered indistinguishable from her brother's, the boy who was murdered, perhaps dismembered (Schlesier (1988) 118), and unceremoniously thrown into the sea before the opening of the play gave him even the possibility of dramatic action. Polyxena and Polydorus will later share a funeral, pyre, and grave even though he died in the most ignoble fashion and she in the noblest. The Greeks do honor Polyxena for her virtue when she dies, but according to Odysseus only a splendid tomb can provide the lasting recognition a dead hero has earned from his people (320), and Polyxena and Polydorus will not receive a tomb, much less one capable of providing lasting recognition for her willing sacrifice. That Polydorus requests from "the strong below . . . to acquire a tomb" (49–50) does not mean that his desire will be fulfilled. The siblings will only share a "grave" (47, 672, 726, 894) and "burial" (508, 1288) that will "hide" (726) rather than honor their corpses as a tomb or gravemarker would. This evacuation of meaning from what should be the zenith of female heroism is perhaps the most tragic symptom of *Hecuba*'s moral landscape.

6 Conclusion: *Hecuba*'s Transformations as Expressions of its Moral Landscape

In the end, no effective difference distinguishes Odysseus's sophistry from Polymestor's crime. Hecuba's revenge translates the antisocial nature that Polymestor evinces through his crime into a physical form so that the audience can witness its full horror. When Polymestor emerges from the tent, he crawls blindly around the stage hunting for the Trojan women like an

anthropophagic beast (1057–1058, 1072–1073, 1072–1073), resembling the Odyssean Polyphemus (Schmid and Stälin (1940) i.3.466 and Segal (1990b) 126–128) and anticipating the monster's language in Euripides' *Cyclops* (Seaford (1982) 168–171). Killing Polymestor's children, blinding him, and exiling him to a deserted island excludes him from society in a more literal fashion. If this is the reality of Polymestor, who openly casts off all pretense to sociality with his egregious violation of guestfriendship in murdering Polydorus, it is also the reality of Odysseus, who manipulates "the writings of laws" to orchestrate Polyxena's death. The interchangeability of their victims' corpses reveals that their actions are effectively identical.

That societal structures not only house but actually equip both Odysseus and Polymestor with the means of enacting their savagery strips away the illusion that any difference between civilization and the savage wilderness exists in a world such as the one *Hecuba* envisions, one where the gods do not enforce moral order and human ethical codes, far from organizing society into a secure environment, enable scoundrels to satiate their own appetites by coercing, manipulating, and harming others. Morality itself is nothing but a naïve fantasy in this environment, the intrinsic amorality of which precludes any basis for determining what is and is not moral. And even if morality did truly exist in *Hecuba*, it could not be practiced because, as the play's protagonist realizes, all of its characters by the end reveal that their very humanity enslaves them to external objects of desire and fear.

Without either a morality that truly exists or the possibility of implementing that morality even if it did, Hecuba can neither suffer a moral collapse nor become a paragon of justice. Rather, her pain and frustrations teach her the truth about her world so that she grows increasingly disillusioned about the power of ethical codes to ensure just behavior. She seems to reach a rational understanding by the time she speaks about universal slavery (864–867) and plots her revenge accordingly (cf. Luschnig (1976), Reckford (1985), and Michelini (1987)). Using both the very guestfriendship that enabled Polymestor to commit his crimes and the traditionally presumed impotence of women, she tricks Polymestor into entrusting both himself and his sons to her and then lures him into her tent with the promise of gold. After blinding him and killing his sons, she uses the façade of an equitable arbitration to conceal the fact that she has already ensured herself a favorable verdict by colluding with the judge, and she frames her defense in the codified, "written" language of *nomoi*. Passion drives her as it does other characters. In her case, it is love for and dependence on her family, which their deaths transform into pain. Because this pain and not some idea of justice compels her to seek vengeance, and because she has been disabused of the notion that either divine or human justice exists, her revenge encompasses the totality of her pain without concern for whether her victims are actually responsible for all of her suffering. The very question of whether her revenge is moral or immoral circumvents the fact that it is an amoral realization of her asocial environment, which places neither curb nor stigma on the compulsion driving her to vent her anguish by causing even more pain. As a creature of this world, Hecuba is and always was asocial because morality and hence sociality have themselves always been fantasies. By aligning the two sets of children, the play's structure also aligns Hecuba with both Odysseus and Polymestor (see Thalmann (1993) 153 and MitchellBoyask (1993) 123–128). Because for the Greeks dogs

straddled the line between domestic and wild, Eumenis and Erinys—they were guardians of houses and flocks, wily thieves and scavengers, hunters, and fiercely protective mothers (Burnett 1994)—her prophesied metamorphosis does to her exactly what her revenge does to Polymestor: it gives physical form to the particular asocial nature she always had but only discovers over the course of her tragedy.

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FURTHER READING

The most thorough treatments of Hecuba I have seen remain Mossman (1995) and, with text and commentary, Gregory (1999). For readings in addition to those cited in my essay, Foley (2015) is an excellent booklength introduction to the history, plot, and major thematic concerns of *Hecuba*. Meltzer ((2006) 104–145) also provides a very engaging and insightful reading of *Hecuba* in its entirety. The standard essays on ethical codes in relation to Hecuba's entreaties and revenge are Kirkwood (1947) and Adkins (1966). These essays remain

influential but have largely been superseded by more recent work, such as Burnett ((1998) 142–176) and Scodel (1998), the latter of which focuses its discussion through the lens of slavery. Daitz (1971) and Collard (1989–1990) further discuss the role slavery plays in *Hecuba*, with particular attention to the choral odes. The relevance of the odes to the play has been the subject of much debate, on which see Padel (1974), Rosivach (1975), and Gellie (1980). There has been much excellent work from many angles on the sacrifice of Polyxena, but for works that focus on this event, I would recommend in particular Loraux ((1987) 34–48 and 56–61), Scodel (1996), Pucci (1977), and the thematic discussion of virgin sacrifice in Rehm (1994). For the importance family plays in Hecuba's tragedy, Tarkow (1984) offers an excellent discussion. On the play's text and transmission, see Matthiessen (1969) and (1974) and Kovacs (1996). On staging, see Hourmouziades (1965) and, more recently, Lane (2007).

CHAPTER 11
Suppliant Women

Laura K. McClure

Suppliant Women has long been considered Euripides' most political play, starting with the ancient hypothesis, which calls it an "encomium of Athens." The play dramatizes a myth that had particular resonance for the Athenians during the last quarter of the fifth century BCE, namely, Athens' assistance in recovering the bodies of the seven slain Argive heroes from the Thebans. Through the actions of king Theseus, its benevolent, protodemocratic leader, the city establishes an alliance with Argos and affirms its religious superiority over Thebes (Storey (2008) 121; Tzanetou (2011)). The play's uncertain date and numerous anachronisms have inspired various attempts to relate it to external political and military events (Collard (1975) 1.8–14; Morwood (2007) 26–30; Storey (2008) 23–28). Adrastus' eulogy (857–917) recalls Pericles' funeral oration of 431 BCE, while his oath promising Argive support for Athens at the end of the play possibly parallels the contemporary compact between Athens, Argos, and two other states brokered in 420 and again in 416. Especially attractive has been the suggestion that the play alludes to an historical event, the refusal of the Thebans to allow the Athenians to recover their dead after the battle of Delion in the winter of 424/423 BCE (Collard (1975) 1.13). Metrical analysis places the play in the mid420s, alongside *Andromache* and *Hecuba*, plays also noteworthy for their "striking structural anomalies" (Smith (1967) 157). A production date between 424 and 420 thus seems most likely. In terms of content, the play can be classed with two other political plays, *Children of Heracles*, probably produced in 430, in which Athens wages war to defend refugees fleeing death (see further Goslin in this volume), and the fragmentary *Erechtheus*, usually dated to 422, in which the city defends against a Thracian incursion, requiring a mother's willing sacrifice of her daughter (Storey (2008) 12, 28; see also Collard in this volume). The latter play bears a striking resemblance to *Suppliant Women* in its focus on patriotism, use of female characters to espouse contemporary Athenian political rhetoric and later influence on Athenian oratory (Lycurgus, *Against Leocrates* 98–101). Wilamowitz even conjectured that *Suppliant Women* and *Erechtheus* formed part of the same dramatic trilogy (Collard (1975) 1.12–13).

Like *Children of Heracles*, *Andromache*, and *Trojan Women*, Euripides' *Suppliant Women* has suffered critical neglect, in part because of textual problems at critical junctures, but also because of discontinuities in dramatic movement and anachronistic references to contemporary political ideology (Mendelsohn (2002) 1–12). Critical reception focused initially on finding dramatic coherence within the play. Zuntz ((1955) 3–25) countered early criticism by arguing that the play achieves unity through its celebration of Athenian civic institutions and recognition of the city's current suffering as dramatized by the laments of the Chorus of mothers and the suicide of Evadne. Since then, political readings of the play have predominated (see especially Fitton (1961); Mills (1998) 87–159; Kavoulaki (2008); Tzanetou (2008)). A recent focus has been the intersection of gender and politics within the play, given the strong presence

of female characters and their influence on civic and Panhellenic policies (Rehm (1988) 284; Morwood (2007) 7; Kavoulaki (2008)). Their moral agency arises out of women's ritual practices, including prayer, offerings, and lamentation, and thus demonstrates their importance for the prosperity of Athens (Goff (1995); Foley (2001); Mendelsohn (2002) 135–223; Kavoulaki (2008); Vinh (2011)).

Building on the latter work, this chapter seeks to understand why Euripides' assigns such a central role to mothers in his tragic reshaping of the myth and its implications for Athenian politics in late fifthcentury Athens (on gender, see also Mueller in this volume). First, the Chorus of foreign mothers compel the Athenian citizens to redress the Theban violation of an ancient *nomos* (law), the right to perform funerary rituals for family members. Another mother, Aethra, is instrumental to their success through her ability to influence her son, Theseus. She demonstrates a female form of patriotism that consists not simply of religious piety, the main impetus of the Chorus, but of a calculated willingness to subordinate maternal selfinterest to the needs of the city in wartime. In this respect, she contrasts the Chorus of mourning mothers who refuse to relinquish their personal grief for political ends. Euripides borrows from another famous encomium of Athens, Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, to construct his story, shifting the female religious imperative from the Erinyes to the Chorus of mourning mothers, the power of persuasion from Athena to Aethra, and the compact between Argos and Athens from Orestes to Adrastus. But in contrast to the earlier play, *Suppliant Women* does not repudiate maternity by embracing matricide but rather celebrates a new civic discourse of motherhood. Moreover, the actions and concerns of mothers and their translation into civic discourse provide a unifying framework for the play.

1 Myth and Plot

The story of *Suppliant Women* is a minor episode from the almost entirely lost sixthcentury epic, *Thebaid*. In the earliest references to the myth, both dating from the 470s, there is no Athenian element: the Argive king Adrastus negotiates the recovery of the bodies and accomplishes funerary rites at Thebes (Pindar *Olympian Odes* 6.15–16; *Nemean Odes* 9.22–4; Morwood (2007) 23; Storey (2008) 12). Athenian intervention is possibly an Aeschylean innovation that served as a prototype for Euripides (Collard (1975) 1.5–6; Whitehorne (1986) 68; Storey (2008) 12–15). According to Plutarch, Aeschylus' *Eleusinians*, produced in the late 460s, included Athens and Theseus, the motif of forbidden burial, Adrastus' supplication of Theseus and his successful negotiation with Thebes (Plutarch *Theseus* 29.4–5). Although very little of the play survives, the title suggests it featured a male Chorus of either local inhabitants or boys, possibly the sons of the slain warriors, called Epigonoi (Storey (2008) 14). In addition, Euripides in *Suppliant Women* draws extensively on Aeschylean *pathos* (emotional expression) in his characterization of the female Chorus (Zuntz (1955) 11). The use of military force to recover the dead may have been introduced by Herodotus, although it is possible he borrowed this element from Euripides, depending on the dating of the *Histories* (Herodotus *Histories* 9.27.3; Collard (1975) 1.6; Storey (2008) 15).

Although it is hard to determine the extent of female involvement in the myth prior to Euripides

given the exiguous evidence, the poet clearly assigns women a central role in his retelling of the story. As Morwood ((2007) 7) observes, “the role of women generally is of profound significance in this play.” Euripides first departs from Aeschylus in changing the Chorus from Athenian men to Argive mothers. He then makes Aethra, a relatively obscure character, Aegeus’ legitimate wife, contrary to all other mythic accounts, and assigns her a primary role in the drama (Mills (1998) 105; Storey (2008) 37). Further, Euripides includes the wholly unexpected suicide of another minor female character, Evadne, wife of the slain hero, Capaneus (980–113; Morwood (2007) 24).

To summarize Euripides’ plot briefly, the mothers of the slain heroes solicit Athens for help in recovering their sons’ bodies after Thebes refuses burial. Aethra enters the stage to perform a sacrifice for the fertility of the land at the altar before the temple of Demeter and Persephone and is surrounded by the Chorus of mothers and their suppliant boughs. Adrastus and a subsidiary Chorus composed of the Epigonoi enter and take up position before the central stage door. Theseus arrives and finds that Adrastus has attacked Thebes without divine sanction, disregarding the advice of the seer Amphiareus (cf. Sophocles’ *Antigone* 198–99). When he rejects his request out of hand, the Chorus supplicate Aethra, who in turn persuades her son of the importance of honoring the gods and defending not only his reputation but that of Athens. He then convinces the city to come to the aid of Argos by invading Thebes. A debate ensues with the Theban messenger about the relative merits of tyranny versus democracy. Theseus stands his ground, determined to recover the bodies either through diplomacy or war. After the Athenian defeat of Thebes, the bodies are returned. Adrastus praises the treatment of the bodies that are now brought before the grieving mothers. At Theseus’ invitation, he delivers an encomium and the bodies are removed for cremation. The Chorus witness in shock the appearance of Evadne on a rock above the temple. Dressed as a bride, she longs to join her husband and leaps to her death while her father, Iphis, and the Chorus watch in horror. The Chorus of boys reenter carrying urns filled with the ashes of the warriors and join their grandmothers in lamentation. Theseus calls upon the Argives to remember Athens’ intervention. Athena appears *ex machina* and requires Adrastus to swear an oath on behalf of the Argives that they will never fight against the Athenians and prophesizes that the Epigonoi will latter attack Thebes to avenge their fathers’ deaths.

This flattering portrait of Athens soon became a commonplace of Attic funeral orations, together with Euripides’ two other overtly political plays, *Children of Heracles* and *Erechtheus* (e.g., Lysias 2.7–10; Isocrates *Panegyricus* 54–95 and *Panathenaicus* 168–74; Demosthenes 60.8; Xenophon *Hellenica* 6.5.46–7; Plato *Menexenus* 239b; see also Loraux (1986)). By assigning women such a prominent role in his patriotic retelling of a minor episode of Theban myth, Euripides engages with and helps to construct a “civic ideology of motherhood” that recognizes the importance of mothers in the classical polis as producers of citizens and soldiers (Loraux (1998) 12). This discourse recalls Pericles’ citizenship law of 451/0 requiring male citizens to have both an Athenian father and mother. As a result, Athenian women directly imparted citizen status and its concomitant right of freedom of speech to their sons. Phaedra, albeit a foreigner, hopes that her sons will “dwell in Athens as free men, flourishing in free speech, because of their famous mother” in Euripides’ *Hippolytus* (*Hipp*.

421–3; cf. *Ion* 671–2). Her desire not to disgrace them (420–21) further stresses the role of mothers in shaping the public reputations of their sons. Another tragic mother, Praxithea, takes this view to an extreme when she states that she hates women who prefer life to their sons' honor (*Erechtheus* fr. 360.29–30). Her willingness to sacrifice her daughter for the war effort represents a supreme act of female patriotism, since "all women naturally love their children" (*phusei. . .philateknon pason ton gunaikon*, Lycurgus *Against Leocrates* 101). Instead, Euripides makes her love her fatherland more than her children (*ten patrida mallon philousa paidon*, Lycurgus *Against Leocrates* 101). The mothers in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* rebel against this ideology with the sex strike that will interrupt the production of new soldiers and save their existing sons from death in battle (588–90), for they have already paid enough "taxes" to the city in the form of sons (651). In recasting the myth first as a negotiation between women and then between mother and son, Euripides not only reinforces the moral and religious authority of mothers, he further privileges an Athenian ideal of motherhood that puts city before family, reason before emotion, and the community before individual. This ideology is put into stark contrast with the inarticulate grief and brooding presence of the Argive mothers for whom the only priority is the restoration of personal and familial ties accomplished through the recovery of their sons' bodies and the performance of proper funerary rituals.

2 The Chorus

As protagonists, the Chorus of bereaved mothers in *Suppliant Women* catalyze the dramatic action through their act of supplication while their sustained suffering expressed in the form of ritual lamentation lends coherence to an otherwise disjointed play (Zuntz (1955) 11–12; Kavoulaki (2008) 298; see also Murnaghan in this volume). Their unique importance is highlighted by several peculiarities of form and characterization. First, they are present in the orchestra from the beginning, entrapping Aethra with their suppliant boughs as she delivers the prologue, rather than arriving in a typical *parodos* (Rehm (1988) 301; Morwood (2007) 143). Second, an unusual secondary Chorus of boys, alluded to early in the play (*paides*, 106) and probably fifteen in number, take a similar position around Adrastus at the temple doors and later join the *kommos* with the mothers at the end of the play (1123–64; Rehm (1988) 275; Morwood (2007) 144; on secondary Choruses, see PickardCambridge (2003) 286–7). The combined presence of the mothers and their grandsons underscores the importance of generational continuity within the play. The mothers are further distinctive in their number: although the actual Chorus consists of fifteen members, they are symbolically seven (963), representing the mothers of the seven slain Argive warriors. In actuality, however, only five mothers receive urns containing their sons' ashes at the end of the play (Collard (1975) 1.18; Morwood (2007) 143–44). They are also characterized as old (*graus*, 9, 266; *geraia*, 172, 258, 276, 359), a further anomaly, since elderly Choruses in Attic tragedy tend to be male (Michelini (1987 221; Morwood (2007) 148). The sustained physical presence of the Chorus, amplified by the dissonant sounds and gestures of lamentation, puts the theme of maternal loss at the heart of the play. Their desire to reunite with the bodies of their sons and to perform the proper funerary rites at home and at the grave impel them to supplicate Aethra.

What is disturbing about the mothers' ritual gestures is the combination of two distinct and incompatible religious activities, supplication and lamentation (Morwood (2007) 150). Moreover, they interrupt a third ritual procedure, Aethra's prayer to Demeter to promote the fertility of Athenian crops (28–31), and threaten to pollute the sanctuary with their inauspicious lamentations. Their arrival thus poses a public threat (*lupron*, 38) because it is not religiously sanctioned (*hosios oukh*, 63; Burian (1985) 130; Mills (1998) 63; Morwood (2007) 150). Their cropped hair and dark dress are also inauspicious, "not fit for a festival" (*peplomat' ou theorika*, 97), since these are normally only associated with mourning (Smith (1966) 154; Morwood (2007) 19; Storey (2008) 20). Indeed, mourning clothes in supplication are without parallel in tragedy (Morewood (2012) 555). References to their physical state, including their prostrate posture (43, 278, 285), tears and weeping (49, 96, 284), selfmutilation (51–2; 76–77, 87) and inarticulate cries (*e e*, 85), emphasize their intense and ominous suffering. Their words call attention not only to their own physical suffering but also to that of their sons, now "playthings of wild creatures" (*kharmata theron*, 282; cf. 45–46), whose maimed limbs they long to embrace (*eman t' es khera*, 61; cf. 67–70). The use of the singular here and elsewhere underscores the unique and exclusive bond of mother and son (*teknnon emon*, 61–2; *paidos emou*, 70).

Their baleful aspect and forceful physical presence recall another Chorus of aged women in tragedy, that of the Erinyes in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*. Although their divine status, horrifying appearance and inarticulate cries render them more frightening than the Chorus of mourning Argive mothers, they nonetheless share some telling similarities. First, both Choruses inauspiciously encroach upon a sacred space where they encounter a female authority figure engaged in prayer and the performance of religious ritual. The Erinyes too are dressed in black (*melainai*, 52), a type of clothing also remarked on as inauspicious to wear inside a temple (55–56). They justify their actions by a divine imperative, the "ancient customs" (*palaious nomous*, *Eumenides* 778, 808; cf. 171) that prohibit kin murder, particularly matricide, since they defend "the nearest bond, that of a mother" (*metros haima philtaton*, 608). The suppliant women act on behalf of similar maternal prerogative, the right to perform funerary rituals for their children, "Defend a mother, city of Pallas Athena, defend her and prevent the pollution of ancestral customs" (*nomous*, 378). Their cause, they claim, is just (*endika*, 65). The inarticulate and ominous presence of both Choruses reinforces an ancient and extrapolitical *nomos* that asserts the primacy of family over that city. Aethra will in turn defend this principle but refashion it through her rhetoric into a civic and, indeed, Panhellenic, imperative that in turn favors the city.

3 Aethra

Euripides gives Aethra a pivotal role in transforming the grief of the mothers into political action, since her intervention leads to Athens' campaign against Thebes and the recovery of the bodies. Because of her surprising influence over male affairs, scholarly discourse on Aethra has tended to focus on the propriety of her behavior and words. Some view her use of patriotic rhetoric as masculine and inappropriate; indeed, her stark advocacy of war and excessive

concern for honor seem unusual for a tragic mother (Foley (2001) 41 and 279); Mendelsohn (2002) 164; Vinh (2011) 335). But we have to remember that Euripides assigns a similar orthodoxy to Praxithea in *Erechtheus*, produced around the same time. Others argue that the audience would have viewed Aethra in a sympathetic light, since old age endowed Athenian women with greater autonomy and agency (Goff (1995) 71). She thus fits with the pattern of other older mothers in tragedy, such as Hecuba and Jocasta, who act as moral agents urging male characters to obey ancestral laws (Foley (2001) 286). The presence of Aethra in the first part of the play not only demonstrates the moral influence of mothers and the importance of maternal respect on the part of sons, it also reflects the Athenian political agenda that dictated the subordination of the familial bond to the needs of the polis, particularly during wartime (Zuntz (1955) 10; Mills (1998) 107). Aethra's patriotic rhetoric contrasts the inarticulate cries of the Chorus, who, although they act on behalf of the religious imperative of burial, nonetheless represent pure maternal instinct. Aethra, on the other hand, privileges the welfare of the polis over her love for her son, espousing a particularly Athenian version of motherhood, one that marshals maternal sentiment for the public good. By reconfiguring the mother as a mouthpiece of civic values and heroic action, Euripides shifts the affective ties between mother and son from the domestic to the public realm, suggesting that the city should be seen as the true mother and its citizens her sons.

In her opening prayer, Aethra identifies herself first and foremost as Theseus' mother, and only secondarily as the wife of the deceased Aegeus (3–7; cf. 23, 27; Mendelsohn (2002) 167; Storey (2008) 32). Euripides' further legitimizes this status by alluding to her formal betrothal, the only version of the myth in which she is Aegeus' lawful wife (6; Collard (1975) 106; Mills (1998) 105 and n. 66; Mendelsohn (2002) 143). As the mother of the city's leader, its *stratêgos* (707, 726), Aethra is also closely allied with Athens: she prays for the city's prosperity after that of her son and views salvific intervention as incumbent upon Theseus and Athens interchangeably (5, 27–8). Like the Chorus, ritual activity justifies her departure from the house and her intrusion into sacred and public space, "I happen to be making an offering preliminary to the ploughing of the land; I have come from my home to this shrine, where the fruitful corn first bristled over this soil (28–31)." She performs this rite as part of the festival of the Proerosia, which sought Demeter's blessing to inaugurate the agricultural cycle (Parke (1977) 72–75; Morwood (2007) 147). But in contrast to the mourning mothers, she makes her request of the goddess on behalf of Athens (Conacher (1956) 26 n. 26; Morwood (2007) 175).

Although also a mother, Aethra differs from the Chorus in that she still has a living son:

> You too have borne a noble son, queen, making your marriage dear to your husband. Now grant to me your attention, grant it, so great the grief I feel for the slain children whom I bore.
>
> (55–58)

The use of *tiktein* ("to bear") as the first and last word of this passage heightens the contrast between Aethra's situation and that of the Chorus (*etekes*, 55; *etekon*, 58). A similar juxtaposition of dead and living recurs later in the strophe, "Prevail upon *your son*. . .to place in our hands the bodies of *our sturdy sons*, deprived of burial" (60–2). The word for "sturdy,"

thaleros, is an oxymoron that implicitly equates the dead sons with the healthy and powerful Theseus while at the same time underscoring their beautiful heroic deaths (Collard (1975) 2.123; cf. Homer, *Iliad* 4.473–89). Motherhood has brought only misery and loss to the Chorus (*meleai*, 598; *talainai*, 825, 1124, and *passim*; *talaipôroi*, 964–5), rather than honor and reputation, as it has for Aethra. Indeed, her maternal status endows her with authority: only she has the power (*sthenos*, 65) to assist them because she is "fortunate in offspring" (*euteknia*, 65–66). The suffering of the Chorus *qua* mothers elicits sympathy in Aethra even as her piety dictates her acceptance of their supplication (*oiktirousa. . .sebousa*, 34–6; Mills (1998) 105).

Since Aethra initially hesitates to intervene, clearly we are to view her as acting in accordance with female norms. She first defers to her son, summoning him from Athens to meet with Adrastus, "For it is proper for women, whoever are wise, to do everything through men" (40–41). This type of gnomic utterance is a standard technique in Athenian tragedy to signal female propriety even as a woman enters male public space (cf. E. *El*. 1052–3; *An*. 213–14). Theseus in turn treats her with utmost respect, voicing concern about her welfare in response to the ill omened cries of the Chorus, "how fear unsettles me, that my mother. . .may have met with some mishap" (89–91). Their relationship embodies the unique bond of mother and son which the Chorus has lost in the campaign against Thebes and which forms the foundation of Aethra's influence over Theseus. She underscores this connection with her first words to Theseus, "my son" (*o pai*, 100), and then draws a parallel between their bond and that of the Chorus, "these women here are the mothers of the sons, the seven generals, who died before the gates of Cadmus' city" (100–102). So as not to exceed the bounds of female propriety yet again, she defers to Adrastus for a full explanation of the reasons for their supplication (109).

A formal debate between the two leaders ensues, culminating in the prostration of Adrastus, who pleads for help, "Bring the bodies back, take pity on my troubles and on these mothers of the slain children" (168–70). To bolster his request, he also invokes the bond between mother and son, calling upon the piteous specter of the mothers with the demonstrative pronoun *tasde* (169; cf. 35, 100) and emphasizing their childlessness (*apaidia*, 170). Theseus, however, is not swayed by this emotional display, nor by their diminished maternal status, but rather summarily rejects the request because of his earlier religious transgression (219–23, 229–31). Adrastus then tries another tactic, appealing to their shared kinship, which he traces through Aethra as his mother, "For your mother is the daughter of Pittheus, who was the son of Pelops, so we of Pelops' land possess the same ancestral blood as you" (295–99). This recourse to genealogy further reasserts the importance of the mother–son bond by acknowledging her contribution to Theseus' illustrious lineage. The Chorus continue to apply physical and emotional pressure by supplicating Theseus directly, grasping his knees and hands and asking for pity (271–90). They further evoke the claims of motherhood, drawing both a parallel and contrast between him and their sons, "Do not, child, overlook my unburied children, the playthings of wild beasts,. . .in your youthful vigor (*en helikiai*), I implore you!" (282–3). This supplication is unusual in that it is not immediately accepted, and, given that tragic characters tend not to change their minds, it is perhaps meant to dramatize Theseus' subsequent reconsideration of his initial stance (Foley (2001) 278). I would take this observation one step further and argue that the failed supplication is actually intended to show the importance of

Aethra as a mother in changing her son's mind.

Aethra reacts to her son's repudiation of the suppliants by covering her eyes with her veil not out of grief, but out of shame (Collard (1975) 185; cf. E. *HF* 1159–60; *El*. 1221; *Or*. 467–70). This gesture calls attention to her role as the moral conscience of Theseus, and of Athens in general, while her subsequent attempt to reverse his decision comprises a "critical moral activity" (Foley (2001) 276). Only through Aethra, his own mother, can Theseus experience the sufferings of the Chorus, change his mind and decide on the proper course of action for the polis. Indeed, Theseus' feelings for his mother ultimately prompt him to heed her. Just as he first reacted with fear upon seeing Aethra surrounded by the Chorus, now he is moved by her tears, "Mother, why are you weeping? Is it because you hear the unhappy wailing of these women? I can understand that, for my heart, too, has been pierced" (286–8). Aethra through her weeping has allied herself with the Chorus to such a degree that Theseus feels compelled to remind her that their suffering is not her problem (291). The maternal solicitude earlier shown by Theseus recurs here at the sight of her grief, and will in fact later inform his own decision in favor of intervention.

Hesitant to get involved, Aethra prefaces her speech with an acknowledgment of possible impropriety, but persists, determined to say "something beneficial to you and the city" (*soi te kai polei kalon*, 293). This declaration represents a turning point in the dramatic action (Mills (1998) 293). Instead of simply drawing on the emotional bond of mother and son, Aethra now espouses Athenian political orthodoxy, availing herself of the democratic right to offer advice to the city (Mills (1998) 114; Morwood (2007) 6). Theseus recognizes her authority, remarking that "many wise things come even from the mouths of women" (294). Her arguments, while they move beyond maternal piety to much larger political considerations, nonetheless derive from her role as a mother and family member or *philos* (296). First she urges the importance of honoring what the gods ordain (*ta tôn theôn*, 301), which will bring her son honor (*timên*, 306). Then she argues for respect of the laws that preserve community. Such a grievous violation of Panhellenic law regarding burial should not be tolerated, even if it necessitates military intervention (311–13). As his mother, Aethra is also responsible for fashioning Theseus' public reputation, as she repeatedly emphasizes: if he does not take action, he will appear cowardly (*anandriai*, 314; *deilos*, 319), while intervention will win the "crown of fair repute" (*stephanon eukeias*, 315) and add to the greater glory of Athens (324–5). Indeed, his reputation is a direct reflection of hers, "You are mine, o son, do not do this!" (*emos g' ôn*, 320/314–19).

Although Aethra privileges personal honor and universal laws, the argument that ultimately prevails relates directly to her maternal status as the source of her son's life and nurture. Theseus both begins and ends his speech by affirming his love for and duty to his mother (Mills (1998) 116) and then immediately acquiesces—"I cannot refuse hard tasks" (337)—because of his mother's willingness to sacrifice his life for these principles. For Theseus, his mother's advocacy of war against Thebes constitutes her most compelling argument, since it goes against her own selfinterest as a mother, whose natural inclination would be to protect her son (344–5). He asks, "What will my enemies say about me when you, who bore me (*tekousa*) and thus are afraid on my behalf, are the first to command me to undertake this task?" (344–

45). Risking the life of her son for a war waged on religious and Panhellenic principles represents her most persuasive, and Athenian, argument, for it reflects the most basic democratic premise, the necessity of subordinating the individual to the polis, or, in the case of mothers, a willingness to sacrifice their sons. Maternal respect also plays a role in changing his mind, as he asks the Chorus to remove their suppliant garlands from his mother so that he can lead her back to the house of Aegeus, "taking her dear hand in mine" (*philên prosapsas kheira*, 361). Their joined hands symbolize the reciprocal obligation of parent and child, which Theseus must respect as the "fairest offering" (*kalliston eranon*, 364). The wording recalls Pericles' funeral oration, in which the statesman praises the war dead for giving their lives as the "fairest offering" to the city (*kalliston eranon*, Thucydides 2.43.2). Once Aethra has persuaded her son to change his mind, she disappears into the house, to the proper sphere of women. Her presence onstage is longer necessary: she has used her maternal influence not only to preserve her son's public reputation, but also to benefit Athens, averting a religious and political crisis.

This transference of the maternal function to the state has deep roots in Athenian ideology, recalling the myth of autochthonous origins, which was also a *topos* of public oratory. In Plato's *Menexenus*, a fictional funeral oration allegedly composed by Pericles' mistress, Aspasia, the city is represented as the mother of the war dead: she it is who gave them birth (*tekousês*), reared them (*threpsasês*), and receives them back again (*hypodexamenês*, Pl. *Men*. 237b–c; see Loraux (1998) 16–18; Mendelsohn (2002) 158–9). In this construction, the body of the soldier does not belong to his mother, but rather to the city. This fits with the Athenian practice, unique among the Greek citystates, of bringing home the bodies of men slain in battle for burial on native soil (Loraux (1986) 18). The idea that the dead are not the property of the family also appears in the debate with the Theban herald, when Theseus states, "We do not possess our bodies as our own: we live our lives in them and thereafter the earth, our nourisher (*threpsasan*), must take them back" (534–6). Adrastus takes this position a step further in the funeral oration when he states that Hippomedon, one of the slain warriors, has made his body into "something useful to the city" (*polei paraskhein sôma khrêsimon thelôn*, 887), a phrase that again recalls Pericles' phrase, *kalliston eranon*, discussed above. Even the mothers' Chorus, who in their excessive grief incarnate the maternal longings set aside by Aethra, grasp this duality; their slain sons are simultaneously their own pride and joy and the glory of their city (*to son agalma, to son hidruma poleos*, 631–3; 370–1, 373, 1164).

4 Recovery of the Bodies

The second part of the play both explores the impact of the war on women and children and also demonstrates the premise implied by Aethra's speech and further articulated by Theseus: the bodies of the war dead belong not to the mothers, but to the city and the public sphere of men. After his failure to convince the Theban herald to return the bodies to the mothers, Theseus marches against Thebes with his army and retrieves them. The king himself takes charge of the funerary rites, burying the collective Argive dead near Mt Cithaeron (757) and bringing five of the bodies back to Eleusis (754–5). As the messenger relates, Theseus, rather

than the mothers, has accomplished the *prothesis*, washing the bodies, then covering them and laying them out on biers (762–6). This performance of traditionally female tasks signals a shift of emphasis from private funerary ritual, in which women played a significant role, to a new system organized around the public funeral oration such as that of Pericles, about which much has been written (Foley (2001) 40 and note 64; Loraux (1986) 49). The limited scope of action afforded the mothers in the performance of funerary ritual in the second half of the play is further underscored by Theseus' refusal to allow them to touch the bodies of their sons. As a result, they cannot accomplish the *prothesis* nor properly mourn them. The issue comes to a head when Theseus and Adrastus return after the third stasimon with five of the bodies and the sons of the seven, the Epigonoi (794–5).

Upon first seeing the mutilated bodies of their children, the mothers demand in the first *kommos* ("formal song of lamentation") to touch them, "Give him to me, that I might fold my arms about my child and hold him in my embrace" (815–17). After the funeral oration, they briefly resume their lamentations while still in sight of the bodies, "Child, I nurtured you, unfortunate, carrying you under my heart, and bearing the pain of childbirth. . .and now I have no one to tend my old age, though I, unhappy one, have borne a child" (918–24). Their reference to the reciprocal obligation of children caring for their parents in old age, *gêroboskos*, recalls, again, the contrast between themselves and Aethra, for while they will grow old alone, she has a son to tend her. The use of the singular here, as earlier, emphasizes the particularistic, apolitical and personal aspect of the mothers' concerns. Seeing their distress, Adrastus encourages them to draw near to the bodies (*ite. . .pelas*, 941), until Theseus stops him. Puzzled, he asks, "Should not mothers touch their sons?" (*tas tekousas ou khreôn psausai teknôn*, 943). Theseus explains that the sight of their disfigured bodies will cause the mothers further distress but promises that they will be able to embrace the bones after cremation (944–6). His response is conditioned in part by dramatic constraints, since the Chorus cannot leave the orchestra (Collard (1975) 2.342). But as Adrastus' reaction indicates, Theseus' prohibition is nonetheless surprising. He consoles the mothers with the thought that they will soon be able to embrace the ashes of their sons (949). This belabored and ultimately negative response to the mothers' request has rightly been interpreted as a final male appropriation and containment of female ritual prerogative (Foley (2001) 44; Vinh (2011) 343). It is also in keeping with the theme introduced by Aethra that maternal affection must yield to political imperatives in the classical polis. Nonetheless, their role in funerary ritual is not completely eradicated but rather reconfigured, as the final *kommos* shows. Like Theseus, they too must learn from Aethra's example.

5 Suicide of Evadne

The problem of affective attachment and of the proper management of (female) emotions in relation to a larger good recurs in the unexpected entrance of Evadne, the wife of Capaneus, who intends to leap to her death over her husband's pyre. At this point the stage is empty of all but the mothers, among whom possibly numbers her own mother; indeed, the Epigonoi may include her son with Capaneus (Storey (2008) 73, 78). This scene is so unexpected that Rehm

comments, “nothing like [this] ever took place in fifth century tragedy before or after *Supplices*, and it would be hard to find a more theatrically daring moment in the history of the stage” (Rehm (1994a) 129). Her “profoundly nonGreek” actions (Morwood (2007) 7) disrupt the malecontrolled funerary procedure initiated by Theseus and continued with Adrastus’ oration and the return of the orphaned youth at the play’s end. The anomalous scene, characterized by Fitton as an “excrescence” (Fitton (1961) 441), has posed a problem for scholars because it serves no obvious dramatic purpose. Evadne's unrestrained emotions and fervent attachment to a single individual, her dead husband, contrast the rhetoric of motherhood espoused by Aethra and underscores the futility of her death, since she acts neither on behalf of divine principle or civic welfare.

In contrast to Aethra and the Chorus, Evadne is not characterized as a mother, but as a bride (1048, 1054–7; Storey (2008) 75). Although the mythic tradition makes her the mother of a son, Sthenelaus, the play does not mention him; at one point Evadne seems to allude to children, possibly orphans in Argos (*teknois*, 1028), but the corrupt text likely alludes not to her own children but to the hope that her gesture will serve as a lasting model of marital devotion among future Argive generations (Collard (1975) 2.373; Morwood (2007) 224). Her intensely personal lyric monody—part wedding song and part ritual lament—recalls the splendor of her wedding to Capaneus and celebrates her second marriage underground in explicitly erotic terms as she imagines “lovingly joining my body to my husband’s in the blazing fire, laying my flesh near his flesh” (1019–21; 1040). Her language is also infused with the imagery of death, for to affirm her marriage she must also die, “I will go to the bridal chamber of Persephone” (1022; cf. 1006–8, 1029–30). Although much as been made of the overt eroticism of this imagery, Evadne’s desire to unite with her husband’s body echoes the mothers’ longing to embrace their dead sons that has been indefinitely deferred.

In dying, Evadne reinforces the principle of selfsacrifice advocated by Aethra in the beginning of the play, but rather than directing her effort to the polis, she dedicates herself to the private cause of marriage. Conceptualized in heroic terms as *eukleia* (1015) and *kallinikos* (1059), her gesture matches her husband’s bravery, while her fiery death recalls the original thunderbolt that smote him (640). As the ultimate example of wifely *arête* (excellence), Evadne’s suicide is intended to distinguish her from all other women (*kallinikos. . .pasas gunaikas*, 1059–61). Her body, like that of Hippomedon, does not belong to her, but, rather, to her husband, as she tells her father, Iphis, “my body. . .not dear to you, but very much to me and the husband with whom I burn” (*sôma, soi men philon/hêmin de kai tôi sumpuroumenôi posei*, 1070–71).

The mingling of the bodies of Evadne and Capaneus accomplished by her immolation on his pyre prefigures the emotional reunion of the mothers with the remains of their sons in the play’s final scene. The event is mediated by the Epigoni, the orphans of the slain seven, who convey the ashes of their fathers at the behest of the Athenian polis (1168). Their presence onstage imitates the Athenian practice of parading the orphans of the war dead across the stage in the opening ceremonies of the dramatic festival (Rehm (1994a) 129; Storey (2008) 80). The secondary Chorus of boys joins the primary Chorus of mothers to form a larger group mixed in age and gender to sing a second *kommos* (1114–64). Such mixed Choruses are relatively rare

in tragedy, in part because they were expensive to stage (Collard (1975) 1.19), and would have thus been dramatically significant to the spectators. This choral formation affirms the importance of the maternal bond to the polis and reconciles the personal grief of the mothers with the claims of the state, reflecting the integration of familial and public interests exemplified in the first part of the play by Aethra's persuading of Theseus and by Athenian funerary practice in general. The joined Chorus evokes the mother–son dyad through the inclusion of the boys, who serve as symbolic substitutes for their fathers and thus restore to the Chorus their status as mothers. Indeed, they first address the Chorus as *mater*, "I carry, poor mother, the bones of my father from the pyre" (1123–4). Although the mothers receive dust instead of bodies, they nonetheless can now fully satisfy their longings for the dead and accomplish their final lamentations. The mutual sorrow of the mothers and sons acknowledges a reciprocal loss: war has rendered the mothers childless and turned the boys into orphans (*orphaneusomai*, 1133). The affective ties between mother and son that were instrumental in the persuading of Theseus and in the recovery of the bodies are vividly recounted in their song, "Where is the labor for my son? Where the repayment for childbirth? Where a mother's nurture and service of unsleeping eyes and loving kisses?" (1135–8). The joined Chorus thus affirms the importance of mothers for the polis; their quest for the bodies of their sons has transcended the private sphere and changed the political landscape of their city, leading to the political alliance between Athens and Argos commanded by Athena at the end of the play (1190–95), a subject broached in the first stasimon (374–6). Indeed, the last word of their *kommos* is "mother" (1164). The affective ties of motherhood and its concomitant sorrows, as it turns out, have much to teach men, as Adrastus acknowledges of the Chorus, "It is they, I think, who are the teachers" (*didaskaloi*, 771).

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FURTHER READING

The most recent, general introduction to Euripides’ *Suppliant Women* is Storey (2008), who covers history, myth, structure, and major issues of interpretation. Text and commentaries include Collard (1975) and Morwood (2007). Zuntz (1955); Mills (1998); Mendelsohn (2002); and Tzanetou (2011) discuss the political aspects of the play and its relation to Athenian ideology at the end of the fifth century. There have been several recent treatments of the intersection of gender, religion, and politics in the play, including Goff (1995) and (2004); Foley ((2001) 272–301); Kavoulaki (2008); and Vinh (2011). A comprehensive discussion of Attic funerary oration and the shift from familybased practices to public burial is Loraux (1986). On staging and production, see Rehm (1994a).

CHAPTER 12
Electra

Hanna M. Roisman

1 Synopsis

Electra has been expelled from the palace to a hovel in the country. Aegisthus has married her off to a Farmer—a decent man of ancient Argive stock, but poor—to keep her from having son(s) who might avenge Agamemnon. Out of respect for her royal birth, the Farmer allows Electra to keep her virginity and exempts her from household labor, although Electra insists on fetching water and doing other chores.

When the play opens, Orestes and Pylades have just arrived in the neighborhood of Electra's hut. Because Aegisthus, fearing revenge, has put a price on Orestes' head, Orestes plans to remain in the countryside to avoid recognition, ready to cross the border if danger threatens. He seeks out his sister to enlist her help in avenging his father's murder, but does not identify himself when they meet, pretending instead to be an emissary from her brother on a fact finding mission about the murderers. The Farmer invites the two young men to his hut, and the Old Man arrives to supply the necessary provisions. Years before, the Old Man had smuggled the young Orestes to Phocis after the murder of Agamemnon, and he now recognizes Orestes by a scar next to his eyebrow. A brief recognition scene between brother and sister follows. Orestes asks advice from the Old Man on how to avenge his father. He learns that Aegisthus is not in his palace but nearby, preparing a sacrifice to the Nymphs. If he sees Orestes and Pylades passing by, he is likely to invite them to the feast, where Orestes can take his revenge. Electra immediately volunteers to arrange the murder of her mother. She sends the Old Man to tell Clytemnestra that she has given birth to a baby boy and to ask her to come and perform the sacrifice required for the occasion.

All proceeds according to plan: Orestes kills Aegisthus during his ritual sacrifice, and Orestes and Electra together kill their mother once she enters Electra's hovel. Following the murder of Clytemnestra, they are struck with the horror of their deed, and the Chorus of countrywomen—sympathetic and supportive up to this point—are also appalled by the matricide. Suddenly the Dioscuri arrive through the sky as *dei ex machina*. They criticize the oracle commanding Orestes to commit matricide and preview the future: Orestes will be haunted by the Furies and will have to stand trial, but he will be acquitted and go to found a new city in Arcadia. Electra too must leave Argos, marry Pylades, and move to Phocis, taking the Farmer with them and making him rich.

2 Date

The avenging of Agamemnon's murder is the only Greek myth for which we have extant

treatments by all three of the great Athenian playwrights. Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* is dated to 458 BCE, Sophocles' *Electra* less certainly to between 418 and 410, and Euripides' *Electra* to either 422–417or 415–413. Scholars still debate the order of Sophocles' and Euripides' plays because their many similarities and echoes suggest that one of them either was influenced by or responding to the other. The view maintained in this chapter is that Sophocles' play preceded Euripides' (the discussion below follows Roisman and Luschnig (2011) 28–32 with bibliography; see also Conacher (1967) 202n9).

While the two plays are best understood as different responses to Aeschylus (Finglass (2007) 3; for Sophocles, see, for example, WinningtonIngram (1980) especially 225–228; for Euripides, WinningtonIngram (2003/1969)), their characterizations of Electra suggest Sophocles' precedence. Both Sophocles and Euripides depart radically from Aeschylus' treatment of the heroine, which paints her as a secondary figure—a young girl obedient to her mother and taking no part in the revenge. The two later playwrights place Electra at the center of the tragedies named for her, showing us a grown woman who is the driving force behind the revenge and participates in it as fully as her gender allows. Sophocles' Electra is a rebellious and principled fighter for justice. Her passionate idealism compels admiration despite its rigidity, lack of nuance, and destructive effect on herself and others. Euripides' protagonist, on the other hand, is driven by a very personal hunger for revenge. His Electra is full of resentment at having been rejected by her mother, expelled from her father's house, and wed to a man beneath her station. Although these wrongs provide ample motive for her pursuit of vengeance, she is never shown as rising above or beyond her own concerns or endowed with any of the redeeming virtues of her Sophoclean namesake. It seems more logical that if a playwright wished to elevate a minor character, as Aeschylus' Electra is, he would depict her as heroic and tragic, rather than as petty and vindictive. In other words, Euripides seems to be responding not only to Aeschylus (as in his use of the tokens of recognition 520–46, the breast motif 1207, 1215, and the chariot scene 987–1007; for further discussion see Roisman and Luschnig (2011) on 520–44 with bibliography; Torrance (2013) 14–33), but also to Sophocles, by taking his grand heroic figure and making her the resentful wife of a poor farmer.

3 The Myth

Euripides' *Electra* is based on one of the myths relating the succession of afflictions that befell the House of Atreus (for Euripides' use of myth, see further Wright in this volume). As early as line 11 the play mentions Tantalus, the progenitor of the Atreids. By bringing up his name, the play hints at his crime against the gods, but says no more. Nor does it allude to Pelops, Tantalus' son, who brought a curse on his family through double treachery. According to the myth, in a chariot race against King Oenomaus to win the hand of Hippodamia, Pelops bribed Oenomaus' charioteer Myrtilus to remove a linchpin from the axle of his master's chariot. Oenomaus was killed in the race when the wheel fell off, but Pelops refused to give Myrtilus his reward and threw him into the sea. Before dying, Myrtilus cursed Pelops and his descendants. The curse took effect with Pelops' sons, Atreus and Thyestes, the respective fathers of Agamemnon and Aegisthus. Euripides' play brings up their feud over the golden

lamb that Thyestes stole from Atreus by seducing Aerope, Atreus's wife (699–746), but it does not tell us about Atreus' revenge on Thyestes: the killing of Thyestes' two sons, and serving their flesh to Thyestes at a banquet. When Thyestes realized what he had eaten, he called down his own curse on Atreus' house. Thyestes then became the father of Aegisthus by his own daughter, Pelopia, but nowhere in the play is the cousinship between Agamemnon and Aegisthus mentioned.

In the part of the myth the play explores, the curse is actualized in Agamemnon's forced sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia to recompense the goddess Artemis for his inadvertent offense against her. On returning home, Agamemnon himself was murdered by his wife Clytemnestra and her lover, Aegisthus. In revenge, Agamemnon's son Orestes, with the help of his sister Electra, killed Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. Euripides' *Electra* focuses on this last manifestation of the curse: the revenge taken by Agamemnon's children on their mother and her lover.

Homer's *Odyssey* gives the earliest and fullest extant account of the revenge, in various tellings by different speakers. The story is meant to encourage Telemachus to kill the men courting his mother and consuming his father's goods while Odysseus is away. If Orestes was right to avenge his father by killing Aegisthus, then Telemachus would be justified in killing the suitors for their affront to his family. Aegisthus is drawn as a villain, a seducer, and murderer who killed Agamemnon in a cowardly ambush (*Odyssey* 3.193–98, 256–61, 4.524–37).

One of the most vexed issues in all three plays is Clytemnestra's culpability. In the *Odyssey*, her character, role, and motives are all left vague. The old counselor Nestor may be considered the most objective teller of her story, and his description is the most sympathetic (*Odyssey* 3.265–72). The other three speakers depict her negatively, but they all have their reasons: Menelaus as Agamemnon's brother, Athena as the Greeks' supporter, and Agamemnon as her cuckolded victim (3.234–35, 4.90–92; 11.409–10, 421–34, 454–56). Only Agamemnon implies that the murder was motivated by lust.

Later works establish Clytemnestra's guilt more clearly. The fragmentary seventhcentury *Oresteia* by Stesichorus of Himera in Sicily (640–555 BCE) describes Clytemnestra's anxious dream of Agamemnon's revenge (*PMG* 219), also told by Aeschylus (*Cho*. 32–41, 523–53) and Sophocles (*El*. 417–30). The dream suggests her responsibility for the murder. It is noteworthy that Euripides does not include it in his play, which is far more sympathetic to Clytemnestra than the others.

By the fifth century, Clytemnestra is depicted not only as her husband's murderess but also as a threat to her son. In two vase paintings of the era (a redfigure pelike by the Berlin Painter, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum 3725, and a redfigure stamnos by the Copenhagen Painter, once Berlin F2184, now lost) she brandishes an axe in the direction of Orestes, who has just killed Aegisthus (see also Prag (1985)). Pindar describes Clytemnestra as a ruthless and treacherous woman from whom Orestes had to be rescued after she killed his father (*Pythian* 11.17–21). Euripides, however, makes Aegisthus the one from whom Orestes had to be snatched away, thus exculpating Clytemnestra from intended filicide (*El*. 17).

In myth, Orestes is always the dutiful son, honor bound to avenge his father's murder. However, his role as a matricide is variously treated. The *Odyssey* tells us that he killed Aegisthus, but leaves his role in his mother's death vague, avoiding moral questions that might undermine his heroic stature. The matricide motif becomes more prominent with later works' focus on Clytemnestra's guilt. The fragmentary pseudoHesiodic *Catalogue of Women* (sixth century BCE) is the first known source to state clearly that Orestes killed not only his father's murderer (Aegisthus) but also his "manslaying mother" (fr. 23 (a) MW, 27–30). In the *Nostoi* and Pindar (*Pythian* 11.36–37), he kills both Aegisthus and Clytemnestra.

An active role for Clytemnestra in Agamemnon's death provides some justification for the matricide, as do her abovementioned designs on Orestes' life. Yet there was apparently a need for further exculpation, seen in the inclusion of Apollo in the myth. As Jebb ((1894/2004) xiii) explains, the god of light and allseeing arbiter of purity had the power to measure homicidal guilt and to cleanse killers of defilement from shedding kindred blood. In all three tragedians, Apollo's oracle authorizes the vengeance and gives instructions for carrying it out. Apollo seems to have entered the story in the *Nostoi*, in which Pylades of Phocis helps Orestes kill his father's murderers. In the midfifth century BCE, Phocis controlled Delphi, the seat of Apollo's oracle. In a poem by Stesichorus of Himera, Apollo gives Orestes a bow to fend off the Erinyes, or Furies, the primitive powers that punished the murder of kin.

Electra is a relative latecomer to the myth. In the *Iliad* (9.145, 287) Agamemnon had three daughters, but Electra is not named among them. Proclus's fifthcentury CE summary of the *Cypria* (circa 776 BCE), a postHomeric epic, names four daughters: Chrysothemis, Laodice, Iphigenia, and Iphianassa. Aelian reports the first known reference to Electra in the nowlost *Oresteia* by Xanthus (seventh century BCE), who claimed she was the daughter Homer calls Laodice, nicknamed "Electra" because she remained so long unmarried: *alektros* in Greek. The pseudoHesiodic *Catalogue of Women* identifies Electra as the daughter of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon, and Orestes as their son. According to P. Oxy. 2506 (*PMG* 217), Stesichorus' *Oresteia* mentioned Electra's recognition of Orestes by the lock of hair left on his father's grave, thereby placing Electra firmly in the story of the revenge and suggesting she played a role in it. But these sources do not tell us how active her participation was shown to be, or whether it was praised or blamed.

4 Dramatic Treatments of the Myth

Aeschylus is the only extant playwright who treats the entire myth in a trilogy. *Libation Bearers*, which concerns the actual revenge, is placed between *Agamemnon*, in which Agamemnon is murdered, and *Eumenides*, which shows Orestes' pursuit by the Furies, his trial for matricide, and his acquittal through the intervention of Athena. In this position, the matricidal revenge dramatized in *Libation Bearers* is the inevitable consequence of Clytemnestra's treacherous murder of Agamemnon, itself the unavoidable result of Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia.

Sophocles and Euripides, in contrast, limit the story to a single play, which necessarily treats

its antecedents very briefly and its aftermath either briefly (Euripides) or not at all (Sophocles). In both authors this condensation has the effect of reducing (though by no means eliminating) the sense of inevitability that pervades Aeschylus' trilogy in general and the matricidal revenge in particular, enabling the later playwrights to highlight the characters themselves rather than the situation or the curse.

Both Sophocles and Euripides also shift the focus from Orestes, who is the hero of both *Libation Bearers* and *Eumenides*, to Electra, their eponymous heroine. As a secondary figure in *Libation Bearers*, she serves mainly to set the stage for Orestes' appearance and long awaited retaliation. She exits at line 584, leaving Orestes to commit the matricide and suffer its consequences on his own, but in both of the later plays, Electra is the main protagonist and remains onstage through most of the action. The later Electras are also older and more complex figures than Aeschylus'. Euripides' heroine is married to a poor peasant farmer, and deprived of the amenities her royal status merits, while Sophocles' is old enough to be married; absorbed by selfdestructive, pathological grief; and subjected to similar deprivation and servitude in the home of the royal couple. The sympathy they evoke as victims is compromised by their bitterness, anger, and stubbornness. Moreover, Electra's prominence and Orestes' secondary importance undercut the heroism of the revenge, presenting it as inspired and partly enacted by a woman.

There are significant differences in the three playwrights' treatment of the dilemma raised by the myth. The ancient Greeks found the story compelling for its collision of two moral imperatives: sons must avenge their fathers and children must not kill their parents. Had the revenge of Agamemnon begun and ended with Aegisthus' death, it would have lacked moral complexity and dramatic interest. The murder of Clytemnestra is altogether different: matricide is an instinctively heinous act, in that it means killing the very person who gave one life. It is fundamentally disruptive of the social and biological order. In committing it, Orestes and Electra are simultaneously dutiful children of their father and criminals of the worst sort.

Aeschylus addresses the dilemma by elaborately justifying Orestes' matricide. This endorsement reflects the earlyfifthcentury Athenian view of revenge as the necessary solution to a wrong. Burnett (1998) xvi, 225–226) points out that this attitude gradually lost favor in the long Peloponnesian War (431–404 BCE) and concomitant political strife, when retaliation became so common as to threaten civic order. Against this contemporary background, neither Euripides' nor Sophocles' play justifies the matricide.

5 Setting

The setting of Euripides' *Electra* is of utmost importance to the characterization and to the theme of revenge, as well as to the audience's probable understanding of events and their reactions to the characters. In order to assess and appreciate what Euripides did with his settings, there is need of some comparison with the other treatments of the myth (for general brief discussion of *mise en scène* in tragedy see Steidle (1968) 9–43).

Sophocles' and Euripides' *Electra*s feature diametrically opposed settings. The action of

Sophocles' play takes place in the city of Argos in front of the royal palace, that of Euripides' play in the country in front of a farmer's cottage. In choosing the locations they did, each playwright availed himself of the conventional conceptions of the place. The city was conceived of as a place of education and culture; of government, law, and civic engagement, but also of sophistry, immorality, and political conniving and betrayal. The country was associated with ignorance and uncouthness, but also with honest simplicity (Sluiter and Rosen (2006) 1–7). Each author's choice reflects his treatment of the myth. By following Aeschylus in setting his play at Argos, Sophocles taps into both the personalfamilial and the political dimensions of the myth of the House of Atreus. There is no known precedent for Electra's marriage to a poor farmer, and Euripides probably invented it. In the small body of extant classical drama, a rural setting is more common in comedy and farce (e.g., Aristophanes' *Clouds* and Euripides' satyr play, the *Cyclops*) than in tragedy. It was also more familiar to the audience than the royal palace of Aeschylus' and Sophocles' renditions, which had no parallel in contemporary Greece (Carey (2008) 99). In setting his play in the country, Euripides brought both the characters and actions into the realm of the mundane. His setting is thus a significant departure not only from Aeschylus and Sophocles, but also from the norm of classical Greek tragedy, which was consciously removed from the everyday to a grander realm, where greaterthanlife characters carried out extraordinary deeds.

Indeed, the rural setting of the play, the unheroic portrayal of Electra and Orestes, along with repeated references to domestic detail, food, and drink (also found in satyr plays, Knox (1979) 254–255), fear of gossip, and an almost obsessive need for realistic proof (Gellie (1981), see "Themes," section 7 below), have led some scholars to ask whether the play is really a tragedy, or perhaps a hybrid genre of melodrama, or even an outright comedy (for discussion: Kitto (1950) ch. 12; Mastronarde (1999–2000); Gregory (1999–2000); Jones (1962) 239–245; Michelini (1987) 204–230; see also Marshall (2000) 325–41). However, comedy in fifth century Athens was a distinctly different genre than tragedy, and terms like melodrama and tragicomedy and what we understand by them, may be anachronistic (Knox (1979) 250–251; see also Visvardi in this volume). Since the play was performed in the tragic *agōn*, it is better to broaden our definition of ancient Greek tragedy than to postulate a hybrid genre (see also Conacher (1967) 200–201).

The key use that Euripides makes of his country setting is to reduce and deflate in several ways. First, Euripides' treatment constricts the scale and scope of the myth, abandoning the political aspect found in both Aeschylus and Sophocles, and focusing largely on the family drama. Although Euripides' characters, especially, but not only, the Chorus, are more concerned than Sophocles' with the morality of the revenge, his Electra has nothing of the political drive or revolutionary zeal of her Sophoclean namesake (Conacher (1967) 202–203). Even though both Electra (276–9, 300–38, 771, 970–84, 1142–6, cf. 135–66) and the Chorus (743–6, 876–9, 957–8, 1147–64, 1168–71) in Euripides' play speak of the justice of the revenge, what stands out in Electra's confrontation with her mother (1086–1123) as the main motive driving her revenge is her deprivation and expulsion from her family home (cf. 300–13). Euripides lets the audience think that she would have been less set on revenge if she had been allowed to remain in the palace and enjoy its benefits (like Sophocles' Chrysothemis).

Euripides also diminishes the heroic stature of his characters. Electra's humility—appearing with a jug on her head, insisting on fetching water and playing the role of the farmer's good wife—borders on the risible. Aegisthus is repeatedly described as fearful, both of Electra and her potential offspring and of Orestes. Clytemnestra flinches under the prospect of public censure (30) and is afraid of gossip (643). Orestes frankly says that he came to the countryside both to make a fast getaway and to seek his sister's help, as if reluctant to act alone. The brother and sister enact their revenge in an underhanded, dishonorable, and sacrilegious way, striking their victims as they are performing a religious ritual and taking advantage of their gracious behavior towards them. Orestes literally stabs Aegisthus in the back after Aegisthus invites him to join in his sacrifice to the Nymphs. He kills his mother as she is about to make a special sacrifice for Electra's supposed newborn son (Foley (1985) 43–46; Rehm (2002 192–193; SourvinouInwood (2003) 346–347).

Euripides further subverts expectations by undermining the conventional country–city antithesis. At first the countryside—represented by the Farmer—is a place of goodness and morality, while the city—represented by the royal couple—stands for evil, luxury, and danger. The Farmer is a "gentleman" (*aristos*, 382, to use Orestes' description), rich in manners though poor in means, who respects the virginity of his highborn wife. The simple countrywomen of the Chorus are goodhearted and generous, offering Electra whatever finery they have so that she can attend the festival of Hera (190–2). In contrast, Clytemnestra lives in a royal palace, the walls and floors of which are stained with her husband's blood, amidst beautiful objects and richly dressed Trojan slave girls (314–18). Clytemnestra fails to tend Agamemnon's tomb, and Aegisthus pelts it with stones (323–31). Orestes' city friends, the Old Man tells him, cannot be relied on to help him when his "luck runs out" (605).

However, Euripides undercuts the antithesis even as he draws it. The Farmer speaks of the ignominy of poverty (34–9); Orestes describes poverty as a malady and a teacher of evil (375–6). The Farmer may be a paragon of natural virtue, but there is a sense that he is an anomaly even in the country. The supposed distinction between city and country, wealth and poverty is increasingly undercut as the play progresses. Electra initially seems to be part of the rural goodness. But when Orestes and Pylades arrive, she abandons the admiration and respect she had hitherto expressed for her Farmerhusband, refers to her marriage to him as "deadly" (*thanasimon gamon*, and equaling twice the death of Iphigenia, 247, 1092–3) and is contemptuous of his meager circumstances (408). In conversation with Orestes, she is shown as more eager than he for their mother's death. The lie with which she lures her mother to her death—that she has given birth and needs her to make a sacrifice—is particularly despicable in that it exploits her mother's maternal bond and care for her. In contrast, Clytemnestra and Aegisthus turn out to be less vile than they were initially painted. Clytemnestra confesses to having murdered Agamemnon out of lust and jealousy, admits her crime, expresses remorse, and comes to Electra's aid as soon as she is asked. Aegisthus is drawn as amiable. He cordially invites Orestes to participate in the sacrifice.

There is more than a simple inversion here and more, too, than the obvious point that neither locale can be described as all good or all bad. The point that appearances can mislead and confuse (Morwood (1981) 368) extends from the country/city antithesis to the revenge. Soon

after the murders, the Dioscuri, Clytemnestra's brothers, appear as *dei ex machina*. Castor bluntly tells Electra and her brother that they acted unjustly—"She [Clytemnestra] met with justice, but you did not do justice"—and, moreover, that Apollo, whom Orestes trusted and whose injunctions he believed he was following, gave unwise oracle (1244–6). He also informs Orestes and Electra that the revenge did not achieve its expected aim. The Old Man had assured Orestes that the revenge would enable him to reclaim his ancestral home and city (610–11). Instead, Orestes is destined to found a new city in Arcadia (1273–75), where he will live in perpetual exile and Electra will leave to live in Phocis with her new husband, Pylades, although her first husband won't be too far away either (1249, 1284–7).

At the end of Euripides' *Electra*, the audience is left with the question of what the revenge achieved other than matricide, murder, and the exile of a legitimate ruler. Of course, the same question can be asked in a play set in the city, but, as Peter Burian points out, Euripides' "selfconscious deviation from past presentations becomes the means of forcing the audience to rethink every facet of character, motivation, and the very meaning of the action" ((1977) 180).

6 The Farmer's Hut

The Farmer's hut in Euripides' play does not receive the initial foregrounding that Sophocles had bestowed on the royal palace in its various designations.[1] The audience can see the hut and watch as Electra emerges from it (54), but it is first mentioned only in line 168, where the Chorus call it a "rustic dwelling." Nonetheless, just as the sight of the royal palace informed the audience's experience of Sophocles' play, so too the sight of the Farmer's hut would have colored the audience's experience of Euripides' play. The difference is that the hut is significant not only due to its own properties, but through its juxtaposition with the frequently mentioned, but never seen, royal palace. The two are juxtaposed right from the beginning of the play, as the audience sees the peasant's hut while hearing the Farmer talk about the royal palace and its inhabitants. After this they are juxtaposed verbally: Electra tells the Chorus that she lives in "a laborer's/house . . . exiled from my father's house" (209), and describes herself to her mother as "dwell[ing] in this hapless house, cast out from my father's house" (1004–5).

These juxtapositions serve as the bases for two contrasts. The first is between the palace, drawn as a place of evil where, as the Farmer relates, Clytemnestra had schemed Agamemnon's murder and Aegisthus hatched his frustrated plans to kill Orestes and Electra, and the hut, a good place in the idealized rural world.

The second contrast is between the meanness of the hut and the opulence of the palace. This contrast is initially made visually but wordlessly: the audience can surmise the contrast as they watch Electra mourning her father's murder and bemoaning her circumstances against the backdrop of the hut (199–210). It is then made explicitly, as Electra elaborates on the differences between her life in the "hapless house" (1005) and her mother's life in the "royal halls" (306). As she describes it, her life in the farmer's hut is characterized by poverty, deprivation, and hard work (304–13), along with modesty, shame and piety (67–76); her

mother's life in the palace is characterized by the beautiful objects and serving maids that Agamemnon had brought from the war, along with sexual and material excess, impiety, shamelessness, and moral corruption (314–22).

Euripides uses the various contrasts both to create or reinforce audience sympathy for Electra and also to raise reservations about her conduct. Initially, the very sight of her in front of the hut graphically conveys the difference between the circumstances in which Electra, the daughter of the great Agamemnon, should be living and those in which she actually lives. Even before Electra draws this contrast herself, the ancient Greek audience, seeing her in front of the Farmer's hut, would have appreciated how utterly alien and out of place she was in the country setting and how inappropriate it was for her to have been forcibly married to a poor peasant. The presence of the hut would have reinforced Electra's sense that living in the country, she was no less an exile than Orestes, who had grown up in a foreign land, as well as the play's message that it was a crime to banish her there.

Yet, we may wonder how the audience, seeing Electra against the background of the hut where she so clearly did not belong, would have viewed her insistence on doing the hard work of a farmer's wife. Would they have viewed it as a commendable expression of modesty and of her making the best of her hard fate? Or would they have viewed her as stubbornly insisting on doing work that was inappropriate to her social status and, moreover, that her husband had asked her not to do? How would they have regarded her constant complaining about her life in the Farmer's hut? Would they not have noted some dissonance in her repeatedly complaining about the conditions of the hut, on the one hand, and the moral goodness that she claimed for it and, by extension, for herself, on the other?

As the action proceeds, the goodness associated with the hut begins to illuminate Electra's deficiencies. Perhaps the first clear sign of this is when the Farmer invites the strangers, Orestes and Pylades, into his home, thereby displaying the hospitality that was regarded as a supreme, godcommanded expectation. Electra, however, berates him for inviting in his betters even though he is aware of his poverty, thus revealing her contempt for the husband who had shown her kindness and respect, as well as her disregard for a central social and religious value of her society. The visible presence of the hut highlights Electra's churlishness, snobbery, and distance from the moral goodness the hut represents. It also supports the idea, implicit in Electra's expression of contempt for the poverty of her husband's home, that even as she would include herself in the simplicity and goodness of the rural hut, it is the opulence of the palace for which she longs and with which she belongs.

In subsequent scenes, the presence of the hut at center stage undermines both of the avengers and the justifiability of their revenge. By the time of the confrontation between mother and daughter (1004–1123), the hut, with its associated goodness, stands as a condemnation of Electra and Clytemnestra both. During the *agōn* the hut is foregrounded both visually and verbally. The audience watches as Clytemnestra's carriage, with her serving maids in a wagon, stops in front of the hut (988–1003). They listen as Clytemnestra reminds Electra that the women who serve are trophies of Agamemnon's victory (1000–2) and as Electra once again complains that she dwells in this house "as a captive after my home was seized" (1008–9).

Against the background of the Farmer's poor and simple hut, Clytemnestra cuts an arrogant and presumptuous figure, ripe for a fall, and Electra, having just persuaded her brother to put aside his scruples and kill their mother (966–87) and about to defile her simple home by the matricide she has arranged to be committed within its walls, is revealed as a morally debased individual who can no longer claim the goodness of the hut as her own.

The last time in the play that the hut is foregrounded is as Clytemnestra enters it in the lead up to the matricide, with Electra following. Electra's entrance into the hut at this point recalls the entrance of Sophocles' Electra into the palace right before the matricide. The implications of their going into the abode are different, however. The entrance of Sophocles' Electra into the royal palace brings home the level to which she has sunk in her pursuit of vengeance. The entrance of Euripides' Electra into the hut taints it with her own corruption and voids it of its initial goodness, reinforcing the point that it is not the place, the house, that embodies good or evil qualities, but the people who inhabit it.

7 Themes

Knowledge

Among the themes of *Electra* are the reliability of information and the relationship between evidence and truth (Pucci (1967) 369; see also Dunn in this volume). This realistic and rational tone is often seen as one of the elements that reduce tragic grandeur to the level of common behavior. Thus the Chorus are careful to mention the sources of their knowledge: they know about the upcoming festival of Argive Hera from the overdefined "milkdrinking, mountainroaming Mycenaean," in short, a Mycenaean mountain shepherd (169–74), and about Achilles' armor from a man who fought at Troy, whom they met him in Nauplia, the port of Argos (452–56; Morwood (1981) 363–64, for comparison, see Sophocles' Electra's unassigned and more nebulous source for hearsay: *hōs egō klyō* "as I have heard" *El*. 566; or Antigone's *phāsi, hōs legousi* "[as] they say" *Ant*. 7, 23, 31). The recognition thus awaits the identification of Orestes by the Old Man through a scar (573–74), the most mundane token of the three mythic treatments. Another example comes after the killing of Aegisthus. Orestes not only identifies himself by name to Aegisthus' attendants, explaining why he is in Argos, but Euripides also makes sure that he is recognized by an old man who was attached to the palace (852–3). A more horrific proof is Aegisthus' corpse (Gellie (1981) 11 n. 12; or just the head, e.g., Denniston (1960) on 894–95; Conacher (1967) 207), which Orestes shows to Electra to prove he has committed the murder.

There is a twist on this theme of exhibiting and attributing knowledge in portraying Electra's failure both to recognize Orestes by his scar and the Messenger as Orestes' slave (765). This is especially noticeable since she was present when Orestes received the injury that left the scar, and had seen the messenger just moments before (Luschnig (1995) 141–143). Of all the twentysix messengers in the surviving Greek tragedies, this is the only one who is not immediately recognized and believed as a matter of course (Gellie (1981) 3–4). This obtuseness on Electra's part belies the spiky sharp logic with which she rejects (508–49) each

one of the three devices used by Aeschylus to effect the recognition in *Libation Bearers*. It is as if Euripides wanted to show that Electra's haughty and selfrighteous solipsism leads her into error through reason (Arnott (1981) 185–186).

Social Status

The theme of social status is interwoven with that of hospitality. Although a poor smallholder, the Farmer claims to be descended from noble, trueborn Mycenaeans. His claim to status based on ancestry must have resonated with the Athenian audience, whose citizenship depended on birth to citizen parents. However, to Aegisthus the Farmer's poverty signifies lack of proper status and thus a weakness. He gave him Electra as a wife to keep her from having children who might endanger his regime (20–26, 34–39, 267). The Farmer politely offers hospitality to Orestes and Pylades in spite of his poverty, and when Electra scolds him for ignoring the social disparity between himself and the noble guests, he expounds the radically egalitarian view that there is no difference between rich and poor once their bellies are full (429–31; Sheppard 1918: 138; Jones 1962: 239–247).

The assumed link between birth and character is doubted by both Orestes and the Old Man (366–400, 550–52; Arnott (1981) 181 cf. *Med*. 516–19, *Hipp*. 925–31, *Her*. 655–72). Euripides, subversive as ever (Papadodima (2014); Synodinou (1977); Ebbott (2005)), shows the questioned assumption to be both true and false. Orestes' and Electra's conduct proves it wrong, since although they are noble by birth, their conduct is selfish, rude, and reckless. Orestes snobbishly refuses to address the Farmer directly even once, in spite of being invited into his hovel (Roisman and Luschnig (2011) on 358–9, 361, 367–400, 367–72, with bibliography). His reference to the helpful Old Man as an "ancient relic" (553–4) is arrogant and discourteous. In scolding the Farmer for inviting men above his status, Electra fails to understand that real nobility is a matter of character, not birth (cf. Jones (1962) 243–244, 252). On the other hand, Aegisthus' inviting Orestes and Pylades to the sacrifice, and Clytemnestra's speedy response to Electra's summons, seem to corroborate the connection between good manners and ancestry. However, both of these "noble" characters are murderers, as the well born Orestes and Electra will soon become themselves. The only truly good character is the Farmer, who is not considered noble by the other characters in the play. Euripides does mercifully whisk him away after he goes to fetch the Old Man, as if to say that this drama of a noble family is no place for decent people. But the Farmer's involvement with them contaminates him, ultimately sending him from his ancestral home to live with his former wife and Pylades in Phocis (1286–87) (for further discussion Luschnig (1995) 105–106, 128–131).

Revenge

While the abovementioned themes are specific to Euripides' treatment, the theme of revenge is both inherent to the myth and common to all three tragedians. Euripides' *Electra* follows Aeschylus in treating the revenge as the inevitable outcome of the preceding crimes, but raises questions about its justness. The play shows two acts of revenge (Orestes' killing of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra's murder by Orestes and Electra together), each accomplished through a contemptible deceit.

Aegisthus' murder is shown in a somewhat more ambivalent light than Clytemnestra's. On the one hand, it is supported by the Chorus and encouraged (and to some extent scripted) by the Old Man, whose age and status as Agamemnon's tutor give him moral authority. On the other hand, it is carried out by decidedly unsavory means, in a setting and situation—at a religious festival while Aegisthus is engaged in sacrifice—where violent retaliation is singularly out of place. Orestes and Pylades win Aegisthus' trust by pretending to be passersby from Thessaly. Though Aegisthus is portrayed as a villain in the previous plays and in the plot so far, having put a price on Orestes' head and forced Electra to marry beneath her status, he is here depicted as a benign and welcoming host. He showers Orestes with praise, and honors him by handing him the sacrificial knife. Orestes returns the favor by stabbing him in the back as Aegisthus inspects the innards of the sacrificed bull. Although no voices are raised against this act of vengeance, its manner and circumstances can be seen as both impious and unheroic.

The killing of Clytemnestra, which occupies the last third of the play, is drawn as an unambiguously vicious act. To begin with, the play casts a skeptical eye on both Electra's motives and the means she employs. In the confrontation between Electra and her mother, both women reveal themselves to be of less than sterling character. Clytemnestra initially defends her killing of Agamemnon with an account of his sacrifice of Iphigenia, but soon admits that her clinching motives were lust for Aegisthus and sexual jealousy after Agamemnon brought Cassandra home as his mistress. Electra asks why she and her brother were made to pay for her father's misconduct—she by marriage to a commoner, he by exile. We are left to wonder whether she would have been less filled with righteous indignation at her father's murder, had she and Orestes been allowed to enjoy the good life of the palace.

As for the means of revenge, the play shows Electra deceiving her mother in a particularly noxious manner, luring Clytemnestra to her home under the pretense of having given birth. Like a good mother, Clytemnestra comes as soon as she is summoned to perform the required ritual, engages Electra in conversation, grants her *parrhesia* (the freedom to speak without repercussions), and forgives her rude outbursts (Roisman (2004)). And as soon as she enters the hovel, Electra and Orestes murder their mother, having exploited her kindness and maternal feeling.

By making a woman the prime force behind the vengeance, Euripides further problematizes the act. The reversal of socially sanctioned gender roles is highlighted by the depiction of Orestes and Electra (see further Mueller). Orestes is drawn as a confused and indecisive youth, asking the Old Man one question after another: how he should punish Aegisthus and his mother, whether he can count on anyone in Argos to help him, and to whom he might turn for support. Electra behaves in a way acceptable for a man but not a woman. She schemes the death of her mother and eggs Orestes on mercilessly, earning even the Chorus's criticism. At the same time, she expresses views that echo her society's belief that a woman should remain in her husband's shadow, hidden indoors, away from the outdoor world of men (73–76; Shaw (1975) 255–257). "Indeed it is disgrace for the woman, rather/than the man, to be the head of a house," she tells Aegisthus' corpse (932–33). The discrepancy between her deeds and beliefs undermines further the morality of her revenge.

Lastly, Euripides describes the royal couple more positively than the other playwrights have done (Burian (1997) 180). His Clytemnestra is neither the majestically overbearing, calculating, *androboulos* (malethinking) queen of Aeschylus (*Ag*. 11; Grube (1961) 298), nor the unmotherly, ruthless Sophoclean ruler who annually celebrates the day of Agamemnon's murder (Soph. *El*. 273–4, 278–81, 293–9, 442–7, 597–8, 1154). As discussed in "Settings," section 5 above, she is a mellower woman with maternal instincts who regrets her past deed (*El*. 1105–06, 1109–10). In spite of her unfavorable depiction by the Farmer, the Old Man, and the Chorus (1150–164, 1168–171), who all describe her as a treacherous wife and cold mother, she strikes us differently in the last part of the play. When Electra utters a hateful tirade against her, Clytemnestra tries to be conciliatory and understanding. As Vellacott ((1975) 238; cf. Arnott (1981) 184–185) puts it, "her answer to thirtyseven lines of concentrated hate is to speak of love." She never denies killing Agamemnon, but she does not gloat as the other Clytemnestras do. On the contrary, she is frightened. In her fear of the people's disapproval, she will travel only in the dark to join Aegisthus for the feast (640–45), and has saved Electra from Aegisthus' hand (29–30). She is also scared of Orestes (1114–115).

Likewise, Euripides' Aegisthus is not the cocky, menacing Aeschylean upstart (*Ag*. 1617–53), nor Sophocles' ruthless tyrant, rejoicing in Orestes' alleged death (Soph. *El*. 1456–63). Never appearing on stage alive, he is described with some sympathy in spite of the murderous attempts he has made against Electra and Orestes in his perennial fear of revenge (*El*. 22–35), and in spite of Electra's claim that he pelts Agamemnon's grave with rocks when drunk, mocking the slain king for being still unavenged (326–31). Even the Messenger, who is on Orestes' side, reports the kindness with which Aegisthus invited Orestes to the sacrifice and how in retaliation Orestes stabbed him in the back during the ceremony (779–89, 839–43). The lush meadows where the sacrifice takes place and "the tender myrtle" with which Aegisthus weaves his garland (777–78) almost lend him some of their gentleness and harmlessness. Even Electra, whose unabated hatred for Aegisthus can hardly be doubted, presents him as more pathetic than evil in her speech to his corpse (907–56). Along with her harsh words about his cruelty in marrying her to the poor Farmer, setting a price on Orestes' head, and having collaborated in murdering her father, she almost pities him for his selfdeception in marrying a woman who has a history of betraying her spouse. Marriage above his status has resulted in always being disgracefully known as Clytemnestra's man, and in living miserably trying to use his looks and wealth to make up for his weakness. Her comment recalls what we find in Euripides' *Melanippe Wise* or *Captive*: "Men who marry wives above their rank, or marry great wealth, do not know how to make a marriage. The wife's interests prevail in the household and make a slave of her husband, and he is no longer free. Wealth acquired from marriage with a woman is unprofitable; for divorces are (not) easy" (trans. Collard and Cropp, F 502; cf. *Phaeton* 158–9 [F 775]; *Antiope* F 214). This is not a portrait of an utter villain, but of a rather unhappy man, especially if we add his constant fear of Orestes. (For further discussion see Arnott (1981) 183–184; Gellie (1981) 5; Lloyd (1992) 55–70, who sees Aegisthus as an unambiguously evil character.)

This more sympathetic depiction of both Clytemnestra and Aegisthus raises the question of whether they still deserve to be killed. Should criminals get a second chance, if they express

regret or have changed (Cohen (1968) 106)? Most modern treatments of the story of Euripides' *Electra* touch upon this question (e.g. Jean Giraudoux' *Electra* (1937); Marguerite Yourcenar's *Electra or the Fall of the Masks = Électre ou la chute des masques* (1954); Jean Anouilh's *You Were so Sweet when You Were Little = Tu étais si gentil quand tu étais petit* (1972); and Danilo Kiś' *Electra* (1968)). (For discussion see Roisman, forthcoming.)

Euripides' *Electra* includes probing questions, as well as doubts about, and challenges to, mythic tradition, accepted social values, assumed gender roles, and existing categories; it is no wonder that the play has retained its vitality and impact into the present day.

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FURTHER READING

Blaiklock ((1952) ch. 9, 163–190, esp. 163–176) offers an excellent account of Orestes as the most tragic of Euripides’ male characters with emphasis on Euripides’ realism in the depiction of the siblings. Cohen (1996) presents a valuable account on the freedoms and limitations of women in Athens in the fifth century.

NOTE

1 Soph. *El*. δῶμα *dōma* (10, 40, 69, 72, 262, 311, 324, 651, 661, 1070, 1130, 1290, 1297, 1325, 1332, 1354, 1424, 1493), στέγη *stegē* (20, 912, 1308, 1392, 1404, 1497), δωμάτων ὑπόστεγοι *dōmatōn hypostegoi* (1386), θύραι, θυράιος, θυρῶν, ἀντιθύρων *thyrai, thyraios, thyrōn, antithyrōn* (78, 313, 328, 518, 1433), οἶκοι, οἴκαδε, ξύνοικος, οἶκος, οικέω *oikoi, oikade, xynoikos, oikos, oikeō* (93, 386, 785, 818, 929, 978, 1101, 1136, 1147, 1309), ἔνδον, οἱ ἔνδον, εἴσω/ἐσω, ἔκτοθεν, ἔνδοθεν, εἴσειμι, ἐκτός *endon, hoi endon, eisō* (79, 155, 802, 821, 1238, 1323, 1323, 1337, 1339, 1369, 1374, 1402, 1403, 1406, 1436, 1451, 1491), θάλαμοι πατρός (190), θρόνοι πατρῷοι *thronoi patrōioi* (267–8), παρέστιοι λοιβαί, πατρῷα ἑστία *parestioi loibai, patrōia hestia* (269–70, 881), κοιτή πατρός (272), τῇδε πρὸς πύλῃ, πύλαι *tēide pros pylē, pylai (*818, 1458), τὰ σταθμά *ta stathma* (1331), ἕδη/θεῶν, ὅσοιπερ πρόπυλα ναίουσιν τάδε *hedē/theōn, hosoiper propyla naiousin tade* (1374–5), πατρὸς ἑδώλια *patros hedōlia* (1393).

CHAPTER 13
Heracles: The Perfect Piece

C. W. Marshall

> Euripides shrank not to teach,
>
> If gods be strong and wicked, man, though weak,
>
> May prove their match by willing to be good
>
> (R. Browning, *Aristophanes' Apology lines 428–30*)

Euripides' *Heracles* is a hugely ambitious play that presented a new model of heroism to its latefifthcentury audiences. The play engaged aggressively with the intellectual currents of Athens, and serves as an important locus for understanding the nature and survival of tragedy. It was also good theater. Heracles was a familiar figure on the Athenian stage, and was often found in comedies and satyr plays (as well as in odd experiments such as the prosatyric play *Alcestis*). He had been the subject of epic, and could appear in tragedies in small but significant roles (as in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*) but he was not, evidently, perceived to be a figure of tragic suffering. Indeed, apart from Euripides' *Heracles*, the only earlier play known to treat him as a subject for tragedy is Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* (see Silk (1985) 3–4; the lost *Auge* is also relevant), and the relationship between these plays requires examination. As one of the socalled alphabetic plays (see Mastronarde in this volume), *Heracles*' survival to the present day is both tenuous and accidental. Recognizing this reinforces how slim are the threads that preserved this unique vision of heroism. Two important papyrus remains point to further uncertainties for the play, which are likely representative of similar issues that affected other plays, but for which no record survives.

1 *Heracles* in Pieces

P. Hibeh 179 (Brit. Lib. inv. 2952) is a thirdcentury BCE collection of fragments that comes from an alternate version of *Heracles*: as Janko describes (2001, with references to previous literature), the fragments offer a version with significant differences in some lines, a greatly abbreviated *agōn* (Amphitryon's speech at 170–235 was at least 32 lines briefer in the papyrus version of the play), and several passages that are not part of the extant version, including evidence of a radically different choral entry song in anapests rather than the lyric song found of the manuscripts. There were, then, at least two versions of the play in antiquity. Further, the extant play (dated on metrical grounds to circa 418 BCE) would seem to be the second one, with the earlier version being reflected in Aristophanic parody of 422 (Beta (1999) 56–57). Two other papyri of the play exist (*P. Oxy*. 4563, corresponding to lines 551–60 of the play, and *P. Heid*. 205, corresponding to 1092–99), the first of which (from the second or third century CE) also contains significant divergences from the manuscript. There

are no independent testimonia for alternate versions of *Heracles* (as there is with Aristophanes' *Clouds*, for example; see Butrica (2001b) 51–62 for different plays with the same title), but the chance survival of *P. Hibeh* 179 makes such a duplication here very likely.

P. Oxy. 2400, a thirdcentury CE document, apparently lists potential subjects for rhetorical declamations: first is an accusation against Cleon for demagoguery in 427, following the Mytilenean debate described at Thucydides 3.36–50; next is "Euripides having made Heracles a madman in a play produced at the City Dionysia is put on trial for impiety" (tr. Kovacs (1994) 63 = T60). This is a fictional situation, not reflecting actual legal troubles such as the impiety trial alleged in Satyrus' fragmentary *Life of Euripides* (*P. Oxy*. 1176, fr. 39 X; see Kovacs (1994) 20–21 = T4.13) and instigated, coincidentally, by Cleon. This brief passage attests to a number of details crucial for any interpretation of the play: well into the Roman period, *Heracles* could be seen as presenting a unique story (Heracles driven mad) that contemporary Athenians (as imagined by Greekspeaking Romans more than six hundred years later) could see as being impious. The play therefore remained current and familiar, able to be understood as radical in its theology; it was not implausible that Euripides could be prosecuted for the content of one of his plays, and that informs our understanding of what it is tragedy hopes to accomplish generally. The specific mention of the Dionysia further suggests at least one version of *Heracles* was part of a tetralogy at that festival; this is often assumed for the extant plays, but some indication (even in this fictional context) does provide localizing corroboration often lacking for other tragedies.

Taken together, these ancient witnesses suggest that Euripides' *Heracles*, though not among the select plays, remained an important part of how the playwright was perceived in antiquity. A midfourth century Paestan vase signed by the painter Assteas (*RVP* 84/127; see Taplin (2007) 143–45), shares many of the features of the scene described by the messenger in *Heracles*, and would seem to be inspired by Euripides. There are differences (for example the goddess Madness is labeled *Mania* and not *Lyssa*), but these may be due to creative invention by the artist, or dependence on another version of Euripides' play (perhaps that of *P. Hibeh* 179). Seneca's version of the story (written before 54 CE) is aware of Euripides' play (in one of its two versions), but is not concerned to replicate the new understanding of Heracles' character. The reading of the play presented here seeks to connect the play's presentation of heroism by means of an unusual tragic hero with a theology that could be seen to challenge late fifthcentury thought.

2 A Hero's Return

Heracles begins with a tableau of suppliants in the middle of the *orchēstra*, seeking sanctuary at the altar of Zeus the Saviour (47–48). Three male children, a mature woman, and an old man huddle for safety (51–54), having come on stage before the play begins, in what has come to be termed a "cancelled entry" (Taplin (1977) 134–36). Amphitryon, the old man, speaks the prologue, stressing the immediate danger being faced by his fellow suppliants, Megara and her children by Heracles, because of the usurper king Lycus, who killed Megara's father Creon and seized the throne of Thebes while Heracles was performing his labors. Even this summary of

events, stated as if these were established and familiar facts with a view to emphasizing the helplessness of the innocents, challenged the Athenian audience, because much of this goes against the received Heracles tradition as it has come down to us. It may be surprising for an audience to learn that Megara and her children are still alive and Heracles is performing his labors for a reason other than that he has killed her (17–21), and many characters believe he is dead. Some in the audience may suspect that these characters will be killed over the course of the play (as in fact happens), but it is misleading to say that the order of the labors and killings have been reversed. Euripides begins his play explicitly denying that Megara has been killed, and inventing a new threat in the person of Lycus (31–43). The earliest audience cannot know what is going to happen after this opening, and the uncertainty the audience feels mirrors the anxiety felt by the characters. Certainly, there is reason to expect Heracles' return, and this marks the play both as a suppliant drama and as a *nostos* play (Rehm (1999–2000)); but the delay of this entry to line 513 (over one third of the play) is also not likely to be expected by most spectators.

The Chorus of old men of Thebes enters singing an elegant short lyric song (in the extant version of the play), and then Lycus enters. He bullies Amphitryon through a formal debate (see Taragna Novo (1973) and Hamilton (1985)). Though the discussion is built around the weapons with which a man chooses to fight, with Lycus arguing that Heracles' bow indicates that he lacks *eupsuchia* (157 and 162, "good courage"), which Amphitryon takes as an accusation of *deilia* (175, 192, and 210, "cowardice," and see 289 and 316) that he in return levels against Lycus. Amphitryon argues instead that a bow allows heroic autonomy, and not dependence on others (189–205). The diverse critical reaction to this debate suggests multiple interpretations were available to an ancient audience too: the bow is variously described in scholarship as a traditional weapon, something new and sophisticated, an evocation of Odysseus' heroism in Homer's *Odyssey*, or as a signifier devoid of any specific valence. Lycus remains unpersuaded, and threatens outrageously to burn them at the altar (240–46). This provokes an amazing response from, apparently, the *koryphaios* (though the manuscripts attribute the speech to Amphitryon, all modern editors since Stephanus in 1602 attribute it to the Chorus leader speaking on behalf of the group). This long speech (252–74) affirms choral solidarity with Amphitryon and, despite physical weakness, hostility and opposition to Lycus. But Lycus remains unmoved and Megara accepts death as inevitable: Lycus allows them to leave the altar unharmed to put on burial clothing, and a series of exits (first Lycus and his attendants, then Megara and her children, then finally Amphitryon) foreground Amphitryon's bitter, defiant prayer to Zeus (339–47; esp. 342: "In goodness [*aretēi*] I, though mortal, surpass you, a mighty god").

Heracles is not actually dead. Yet the audience's understanding is not shared with the characters, who are unable to differentiate "in Hades" from "deceased," and there is clear slippage in the descriptions of where Heracles is: Amphitryon claims he is in the Underworld (fetching Cerberus as part of the traditional twelfth labor, 22–25 and 37); the Chorus assume he is dead in the halls of Hades (117–18 and 266–67); Lycus claims this explicitly (145–46), and Megara accepts it (296–97). The irony is extended as the Chorus sings a eulogy to the dead Heracles (348–441). This elaborate song possesses an unusual metrical structure comprising a

dozen formal units (three sets of strophe, mesode, antistrophe, epode), and is followed by an astrophic lyric welcoming Megara and the children as they return in new costumes (442–50). Excepting the first and the last of these units, each describes one or two notable accomplishments of Heracles: either a labor or some other deed (such as killing Cycnus or fighting centaurs). Eight of the traditional labors are mentioned (including the two deprecated by Lycus at 151–54), in no apparent order (labors four to seven of the list provided by Apollodorus 2.5.1–12 are missing), which gives the impression of an impromptu selection, focusing on Heracles as a global hero benefiting mankind. It is only in describing the final labor (425–35) that the Chorus allows that Heracles may yet return from Hades. When Megara and Amphitryon return with children underfoot (446) the *pathos* is further heightened: Megara turns to her nestlings (a recurrent image: 70–77, 974, 1039–40) one by one, describing the inheritance that they will never receive from their father (462–79). She likens herself to a bee, gathering laments like pollen (487–89), while Amphitryon again appeals to Zeus in vain (497–513).

Heracles returns, having brought Cerberus to the surface and left it in a grove in the Argolid (615). When Megara notices Heracles, the action freezes. His appearance guarantees that his family is now safe from Lycus, but the moment is protracted. Doubting what she sees, Megara instructs her sons to grab onto Heracles' robes (516–22). Before they can do so, Heracles beholds his family, dressed for death (523–30). Two conversations play themselves out, with Megara (531–82) and Amphitryon (585–636), and both work towards a thematically important scene. First, Heracles diminishes the value of all his labors if he cannot protect his family (574–82), denying that he deserves the most important cult title, "of glorious victory" (582 *kallinikos*, a term used throughout the play). Then, reassuring his family that he has returned, he asserts the importance of being a father (629–36). In one of the most touching moments of innocence in extant Greek tragedy, Heracles plays tugboat with his kids, leading them into the palace like a guiding ship (they are his *epholkides* in 631, "little boats in tow"). The choral song that follows reinforces the triumphant return of the hero (637–700). Their celebration goes so far as to challenge the problem of evil, though, wishing ("if the gods had intelligence and wisdom," 655–56) that moral goodness would be apparent to all through divine rejuvenation, a second youth. That's not the way it works, though, as the old men recognize. Their final claim, that Heracles destroys terrible beasts (700), might lead some spectators to question how long Heracles' return can in fact last if he still needs to bring Cerberus to Eurystheus and then back to Hades. These dark notes may offer hints of what is to come, but they do not spoil the celebratory mood. Yet.

At least some in the audience will also be aware that the actor playing Heracles has previously played Lycus (Papadopoulou (2005) 25–28). They may therefore see the noble benefactor also partaking of the impious tyrant, but this is meant to emphasize the contrast between the two roles. Amphitryon lures a returning Lycus and his attendants into the palace, where Heracles waits to trap him (701–33; Sophocles uses this doubling pattern in *Electra*, when Orestes and Clytemnestra are played by the same actor). Music again begins, as the Chorus celebrate the coming slaughter, and Lycus' cries from within the palace affirm Heracles' victory (735–61), and this excited exchange transitions into the next choral song, where again the emphasis on

Heracles' success and his father Zeus' justice (theodicy) affirms the salvation implicit in the killing of Lycus (763–814).

3 Heracles in Pieces

Then the world breaks, and Heracles along with it. The Chorus panics as, on the *mēchanē* (theatrical crane), two divine figures appear: Iris, rainbow messenger of the gods, and Lyssa, madness personified and daughter of Night (see Lee (1982)). The contrast between the two is intentional. Iris probably appears as she does later in Aristophanes, where her winged costume evokes the rainbow and billows like the sails on a ship (*Birds* 1199–1229, produced 414; cf. *ARV* 260/15 and 370/13). Yet Iris as the implacable agent of Hera urges Lyssa to inflict madness onto Heracles so that he will kill his children (835–42); Lyssa finds no satisfaction in her task (846), which is enforced from a higher power. The meter changes and the urgency rises:

> *Iris*.
>
> Do not advise against the schemes of Hera and myself.
>
> *Lyssa*.
>
> I turn your path towards good, and not towards evil.
>
> *Iris*.
>
> The wife of Zeus did not send you here to be sensible [*sōphronein*].
> (855–57)

The physical appearance of the goddesses provides a sudden reversal to the plot as seen so far. Within the play, it confirms Hera's wrath against Heracles: though many have doubted the unusual circumstances of the hero's birth, the appearance of two goddesses confirms the active, divine interference in his life, as well as his divine parentage. The bloodthirsty and spiteful Iris is as unexpected a portrayal as the pitying Lyssa. If the personification of wolfish Madness (Lincoln (1991) 131–37) can resent her charge to drive Heracles insane, then the audience's pity is also enlisted fully.

Euripides has struck a delicate balance: even though so much of the dramatic characterization is invented and at odds with the established legend, and even though Heracles is not a usual tragic protagonist, the situation remains nonetheless familiar. Of course his family is in danger (cf. *Heraclidae*; see Goslin in this volume); of course he can help them; and of course Hera's jealousy will assert itself. The cause of Hera's jealousy is left vague deliberately. Heracles is not punished for anything he has done, but, at the first moment that Zeus has permitted, she has struck (827–32). It would be wrong, though, to make her nothing more than a personification of accidental (bad) luck (*Tychē*). The events of the play are deliberate, malicious, and thoroughly thought through. Madness itself argues against it, but Hera's will is enacted. Lyssa steps off the *mēchanē* and enters the palace through the roof in pursuit of her quarry as Iris flies away.

The horror unfolds in stages. The Chorus's song (875–85) is cut off before there is time for the regulating rhythms of strophic responsion to assert themselves, as another voice is heard within the *skēnē*. This time it is Amphitryon, whose cries echo and invert those of Lycus, and madness takes hold (886–905). A messenger appears, in one of tragedy's conventional gestures for the presentation of monstrous deeds. His preamble announces simply, "The children are dead" (913). The speech (922–1015) is extravagant in its detail, even though the messenger recognizes the inadequacies of words to rise to such events: "One could not say more than we have suffered" (*ouk an tis eipoi mallon ē peponthamen*, 916). British poet Tony Harrison isolates this line in his play *Fram* ((2008) 9–11), and identifies the messenger speech as the "the highest form of eloquence a man can hope to reach":

Ninetythree lines in graphic, passionate succession

giving the unspeakable poetical expression.

The messenger begins with a pious family conducting purifications at an offstage altar of Zeus Herkeios (922–31), when Lyssa, unseen by the narrator, strikes: "and he was no longer himself" (*ho d' ouketh' hautos ēn*, 931). The nature of the madness is delusional, as Heracles imagines he sets off with the intention of killing Eurystheus while he in fact remains inside his house. He imagines he drives a chariot first to Megara, then to Corinth, then to Mycenae (946–63). This causes a mixed reaction, both laughter and fear, from the household slaves (950–52). He perceives Amphitryon as Eurystheus' father (967–68), and his children as if they were Eurystheus' as well (970–71, 982–83, 989). Heracles slaughters his children, one by one, as they flee desperately, killing the last along with his wife with a single arrow (1000). The violence is extreme, and the death of Megara unexpected since it had not been announced in the messenger's preamble. The heartwrenching individualized accounts of the children's murders (969–1000) provide a grim echo of Megara's earlier hopes for their futures (460–79). As Heracles is about to slaughter Amphitryon too, Athena appears (accepting Robertson's emendation in 1002) and hurls a rock at him that puts Heracles to sleep (as had been opaquely suggested at 906–09), whereupon Amphitryon, the messenger, and other servants bind Heracles with ropes to a broken pillar.

The madness of Heracles operates on many levels. First, as Heracles misperceives his family, he blurs his own identity with that of Eurystheus, who becomes a doppelgänger to him. This pairs the two in terms of mythic structure and underscores the traditional ambivalence in the presentation of the hero (Ruck (1976) 54–55). It also adds to the corruption of sacrificial imagery that is present throughout the play (Foley (1985) 147–204). Secondly, though the illness is imposed externally by Lyssa, its characteristics possess a psychological plausibility: delusional misidentification of people who are subsequently attacked is paralleled in modern cases of PTSD (Silva et al. (1998)), and Heracles' suffering may be drawn on Euripides' own observations of Athenian combat veterans. Finally, though Zeus has allowed this attack to occur, Hera's wrath is still subject to limits, and Athena's theophany assures the spectators of some continued divine support. The audience never sees Athena, nor (most likely) Lyssa again; but the conflict is enacted psychologically, physically, and theologically within the house,

“You, and your bow and arrows, and one of the gods are responsible” (1135).

The messenger leaves the stage in silence before the old men begin their next song, but as they reach for mythological parallels to this slaughter (1016–27), the *ekkyklēma* (a wheeled platform) appears in the doorway, revealing the interior scene as it rolls out. This compounds the horror, as interior space is thrust into the exterior light of day. Since the house pillar is visible along with Heracles and the slaughtered innocents (and will remain so until the end of the play; 1028–38), the abruptness of this warping of space is explicit, and remains so. Again the Chorus fails to introduce the regularity of strophic responsion, and will have almost no role for the remainder of the play, except as constant witnesses. Amphitryon follows and, in lyric dialogue with the Chorus, urges the old men to silence, so that Heracles’ rampage may cease (1042–86; the paradox of a song urging silence is repeated by Euripides at *Orestes* 132–73). Slowly Amphitryon overcomes his fear, and with paternal concern ensures that Heracles has regained his wits, unbinds him, and forces him to confront the horrors he has perpetrated (1089–1145).

Heracles’ response in the light of his behavior is one that is ethically consistent for a Greek hero: like Ajax in Sophocles’ play, he wishes to commit suicide. These thoughts are interrupted by the unexpected arrival of Theseus, a friend and kinsman (1154). Theseus has been mentioned in passing (619–21, and cf. Athena’s unexpected appearance at 1002), preparing for the character’s arrival without explicitly telegraphing it to the audience. Patiently, Amphitryon and Theseus convince Heracles to endure, to continue to live as a refugee in Theseus’ native Athens (1322–37; cf. Dunn (1997) 90 n. 13: “The story of Heracles’ retirement to Athens is almost certainly his invention, otherwise unattested and contradicting his apotheosis in Locris”). Theseus’ exemplary friendship (*philia*; see Johnson (2002)) is owed to Heracles, and does not diminish in adversity (1220–25), nor in light of ritual pollution (1232–34, 1281–90). Theseus is not a mortal substitute for the *deus ex machina*: his appearance on stage instead of (for example) Athena points to Euripides’ substitution of a human standard against a divine one in the meaning of the play.

It is in this context that Heracles speaks a notoriously controversial passage:

> Ah me! This is, to be sure, a diversion from my misfortunes, but I do not think, have never believed, and will never be convinced that the gods have illicit love affairs or bind each other with chains or that one is master of another. A god, if he is truly a god, needs nothing. These are the wretched tales of poets.
>
> (1340–46, tr. Kovacs)

The child of an “illicit love affair” himself (cf. Xenophanes fr. 11, which attributes adultery to the gods of Homer and Hesiod), Heracles denies what the play has asserted as the truth of his parentage, while responding to an earlier speech of Theseus (1314–21; Bond (1981) 399). “For this startling inconsistency,” writes Stinton ((1990) 263), “many explanations have been offered, none satisfactory.” This is not simply the voice of Euripides, dismissing the possibility of the surrounding dramatic action or denying the gods (Greenwood (1953) 67; Conacher (1967) 80; cf. Ruck (1976); Brown (1978); and Michelini (1987) 272–76, “the fiction erases

itself"). Nothing marks the passage as metatheatrical, and it is doubtful whether there are any such illusionbreaking moments in Euripides: this would introduce a nontragic mode of discourse and would separate the passage from the dramatic action; such a solution saves the critic from the biographical fallacy but undermines the entire play. Of course, Euripides too is a poet, but competing explanations, claiming that Heracles' "fundamental faith in the gods remain[s] unshaken" (Gregory (1991) 46), are also unconvincing.

At the core of the play is a valorization of humanism, and this too has been seen as an expression of Euripides' beliefs:

> The gods are really utterly irrational. If, however, we do give them human form, we can only express this irrationality by crediting them with motives so low as to be virtually sub human.
>
> (Chalk (1962) 16)

This is also not a sufficient explanation of *Heracles* 1340–46. Humanity may be more attractive than the gods, but that does not affect what might be called Heracles' "genetic" reality as the son of Zeus. Chalk's description is however an ideal account of the Heracles story in Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* (Adkins (1966) 209–19 critiques Chalk's argument). In that play, too, Heracles is away and returns to his wife (in this case, Deianira) following his labors. The confluence of multiple Zeussent prophecies, interpreted correctly only during the dramatic action, determines that Heracles is to die at this time. The trigger for the resolution is Heracles himself, who has brought the captive princess Iole home with him as a bedmate. Deianira's response is not the jealous fury of Medea, but a desperate attempt to rekindle Heracles' love that proves disastrous. What should be the moment for Heracles to demonstrate his supreme heroic excellence in fact shows him a merciless and savage monster. *Women of Trachis* shows Zeus' behavior as cruel and capricious, and no mention of Heracles' apotheosis is made: if it is to be assumed, it is shown clearly to be morally unwarranted (though see Holt (1989); Finkelberg (1996); and MitchellBoyask (2008) 67–104 for more favorable views of Heracles). Sophocles' bitter ironic judgment on the arbitrary nature of Zeus is a harsh indictment of received Athenian religious values. The Zeusshaped hole found in *Women of Trachis* is maintained in Euripides' *Heracles*. In Sophocles, it serves to bestialize Heracles the son of Zeus, who consequently becomes "subhuman," as Chalk describes. Euripides instead has Heracles choose something positive to fill the void, which continues in the steadied absence of reference to a possible apotheosis.

4 Of God to Man

Euripides has Heracles say something he knows to be untrue. Heracles is not seeking to deceive someone, nor indeed himself. Rather, I contend, these lines are determinative, and represent an act of will by Heracles—what Aristotle might call *prohairesis* or "purposive choice." As such, they are subject to moral evaluation as would be any purposive act. Heracles chooses to adopt a worldview that he knows is not an accurate description of the universe: earlier (1263–64) he has affirmed that (genetically) Zeus is his father, but the words that

follow immediately, spoken to Amphitryon, represent another purposive choice: “I regard you as my father, and not Zeus” (1265 *patera gar anti Zēnos hēgoumais’ egō*). With *hēgoumai* Heracles appropriates a human perspective, accepting the frail mortal Amphitryon as his father. Since fatherhood is a deliberately muddled concept in the play (Padilla (1994)), the emphatic nature of the purposive choice cannot be understated.

Heracles’ choice is in direct contradiction to the events of the play. Heracles does not gain anything by it: Hera’s wrath is not as a result abated, and while it may exhibit the virtues of compassion or pity (*oiktos*, *eleos*) for Amphitryon, it goes against notions of Greek heroism. A hero is defined and identified with respect to his father and his glory (*kleos*). Here, Heracles identifies himself as the child of a mortal rather than as the child of Zeus. This willful act (1264–65) prepares the audience for the later denial (1340–46), which becomes only an extension of the earlier passage. Euripides presents the decision as a key to evaluating his presentation of Heracles’ *arēte*—the excellence that defines his heroism (contrast Gilgamesh, who resigns himself to his humanity after having striven for immortality unsuccessfully). Emerging from Hades, Heracles is destined for apotheosis, but for this decision. Heracles’ decision to treat Amphitryon as his father reconfigures the dramatic action that has been presented. The initial suppliantaction was resolved by the sudden, unexpected appearance of Heracles from his successful *katabasis* (descent to the underworld). This symbolic conquest of the barrier of death is a sure indication of Heracles’ divine parentage and affirms his heroic position within a traditional framework. It is precisely this success, however, that motivates the appearance of Iris and Lyssa: Hera’s revenge recognizes Heracles’ liminal transgression and affirms Zeus’ paternity. Heracles’ deliberative act then changes the terms by which audience members evaluate this catastrophe. While in no way can the outcome be considered positive, Heracles’ response to this adversity is nevertheless heroic: Heracles is removed from his exalted place among men and is humbled, but Euripides presents this as being virtuous.

The twin themes of fatherhood and friendship contribute to this understanding: Amphitryon’s defiant prayer to Zeus and claim of superiority over Zeus (339–47) becomes a claim of triumph. Like Hector in *Iliad* 6, Heracles affirms a human ideal when he puts aside the things of war to spend time with his children and leads them into the palace playing tugboat (Michelini (1987) 242–54). The motif of friendship begins with a straightforward “help friends/harm enemies” (585–86) but comes to the fore with Theseus’ arrival, and his rationalistic affirmation that *philia* is stronger than the threat of religious pollution (1223–25). The two themes come together in lines 1401–09, a marvelous piece of careful stage action. The embrace between Theseus and Heracles, “a friendly yoke” (1403), is presented in terms of a surrogate sonship (at 1401 Heracles says “Having lost my sons, I have you as my son”). This mirrors the earlier father–son imagery of the toy boat, and is recalled explicitly as the Theseus leads Heracles when they depart, as if the hero were “little boats in tow” (*epholkides*, 1424). This physical contact in the first embrace is immediately juxtaposed with a second embrace moments later between Heracles and Amphitryon (1409)—slow, deliberate action that presents two tableaux of mutual assistance in a time of greatest need. Even the Chorus’ final line (1428) sees Heracles as a friend. Of this moment one scholar writes, “Heracles’

acknowledgement of his neediness and his acceptance of Theseus' companionship are a crucial part of recognizing himself as mortal, truly the son of Amphitryon" (Gregory (1991) 146). I am claiming precisely the reverse: that "truly"—in every objective sense—Heracles is not Amphitryon's son. It is only by Heracles' act of will that Euripides allows this to be tenable. Heracles chooses to be human, and to let the frail Amphitryon be his ethical standard in spite of the genetic reality. For Heracles, it is not some divine standard external to the world, but it is humanity that is to be the measure of all things.

Heracles' decision to be less than he is, and to be measured on purely human terms, is established by Euripides to be an act of heroism. The vocabulary that permits this formulation is derived from the intellectual climate of the late fifth century, and specifically from the Sophists. Heracles therefore becomes a Sophist hero. Modern accounts of Sophistic thought are as diverse as the Sophists themselves (see Dunn in this volume). Through the humanism evident in the hero's purposive choice, Euripides has Heracles address contemporary Sophistic debates. This is not a representation of the views of an individual philosopher, nor is this a complete account of heroism within *Heracles*. Sophism contributes to the overall meaning of the play, found at times in Heracles, Theseus, and Lycus, and demonstrates Euripides' active engagement with contemporary intellectual currents. Before Heracles appears, the bow is ascribed a Sophistic valence in the *agōn* between Lycus and Amphitryon. According to Michelini ((1987) 244), the debate "is in fact an important part of the treatment of Heracles as a modern and revisionist hero."

The shocking appearance of Madness and Iris highlights the tension that exists between image and reality, another Sophistic concern (cf. *Helen*). More relevant, though, is an example of Sophistic *epideixis* from Prodicus of Ceos, described by Xenophon (*Mem* 2.1.21–34; see Kuntz (1994)). Prodicus used Heracles as an example of moral goodness, when he chooses a life of Virtue. Two divinities approach Heracles at the crossroads, one modest and dressed in white (Virtue), the other fleshy, caked in makeup, and dressed revealingly (Vice). While the speech Xenophon describes need not preexist the play, the appearance of two contrasting goddesses in a context of a choice made by Heracles is surely significant. We cannot know to what extent the play's costumes reflected the contrast between the two goddesses, but both Euripides and Prodicus reject the traditional appetitive Heracles for one concerned with humanistic virtue, and some meaningful connection likely exists for some spectators.

The probably fictitious account that Protagoras' *On the gods*, the most notorious formulation of theological skepticism, was first read in Euripides' house (Diogenes Laertius 9.54, Kovacs (1994) 32–33 = T15) further demonstrates that some in antiquity related Euripides to Sophistic thought. Heracles' position is more agnostic than that of the presocratic Xenophanes, and more clearly a product of late fifthcentury intellectualism. But as a dramatist and not a philosopher, Euripides can let his characters have it both ways. Heracles' deliberative act at lines 1264–65 represents a positive, humanistic act of heroism. Immediately before this, he affirms his genetic identity: "Zeus—whoever Zeus is—begot me as an enemy for Hera" (lines 1263–64; cf. Bond (1981) 383, who notes that the "traditional liturgical formula" is "meant to shock"). Euripides does not receive Sophistic ideas without question, but explores their implications and creates a notion of heroism amenable to the late fifthcentury intellectual climate. *Heracles* valorizes a

skeptical humanism that would not have been possible even ten years previously. Euripides constructs a framework that does not presuppose audience familiarity with Sophistic *topoi*, but invites emulation through that most popular of heroes, the son of Zeus.

It is easy to be distracted, as has much criticism of the play, by questions of dramatic unity (see, for example., Barlow (1982)). In 1894, Wilamowitz defended the unity of the play by suggesting that Heracles is always mad, and signs of this are evident when he first appears. The appeal of this interpretation as psychological research developed in the latenineteenth century is clear, but this denies the play's insistence that the madness is imposed externally (Riley (2008) 7–8, 209–10, 231–32, 236, 239, 242, and 250 traces the importance of line 931, "And he was no longer himself," in these interpretations, which impacted both scholarship and stage performances). The playwright is not constrained in where he begins or ends his tale, and so it helps to look for evidence of overall coherence. For example, "The arrival of Theseus distracts the focus from the immediate arguments, so that Heracles' decision to live on is part of a package of ideas rather than a simple victory of the Stronger over the Weaker argument" (Griffiths (2006) 94). Similarly, Heracles' rejection of suicide cannot be severed from the larger intellectual world of the play, which rejects more traditional Greek values (the principal rejection of suicide is at 1347–51; see Furley (1986); Yoshitake (1994); and de Romilly (2003)). More important are the unifying threads. In addition to some of the themes already described and the progressive disempowering of the Chorus, Heracles shares a number of narrative features with other Euripidean plays from the 410s, including *Electra* (Papadopoulou (2005) 14, 37–38) and *Iphigenia among the Taurians* ((2005) 64–65), as well as the later *Bacchae* ((2005) 48–54; Bierl (1991) 140–45).

Heracles is a play in which a man rejects the gods, though he knows they exist, because human values are superior to divine ones. It is not that Heracles believes in perfect gods, but he indicts the real gods, including his father Zeus, for not being better than they are. Heracles rejects his anticipated divinity, and "by willing to be good" shows himself superior to the gods. The poet Robert Browning recognized this, when in 1875 he chose to incorporate a full translation of *Heracles*, which he called "the perfect piece," in his long poem *Aristophanes' Apology* (line 3534; see Riley (2008) 182–206). It is possible to consider that the play

> may be most intelligible as an exploration of "what it means to be a hero," i.e. as a dramatization of the varying demands placed on an outstanding individual struggling with divided loyalties to his family and to wider responsibilities.
>
> (Griffiths (2006) 25)

The play does more than this, though. Euripides offers a new standard for heroism, one that establishes a human value, compassion (felt for family, felt for a friend), and sets it above anything the gods have to offer. He is able to do so because of the pessimistic view of Heracles as a tragic figure that Sophocles had presented. In building on this, Euripides gives Heracles a human choice, and in that choice resides an element of hope.

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FURTHER READING

Silk (1985) presents a clear introduction to Heracles in fifthcentury drama. Bond (1981) offers the best commentary on the Greek of the play in English. Foley ((1985) 147–204), Michelini ((1987) 231–76), and Gregory ((1991) 121–54) offer important discussions of principal themes of the play, with reference to earlier literature. Rehm (1999–2000) considers how performance instantiates the themes of *nostos* and suppliancy. Riley (2008) discusses aspects of the play's reception.

PART III
Later Plays (After 416 BCE)

CHAPTER 14
Trojan Women

Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz

The *Trojan Women* has not always been one of the most highly regarded of Euripides' plays. Although it was canonical in antiquity, one of the school texts that was handed down with commentary, modern critics often say that it is "not a great play," that nothing happens, or that it is not a classic tragedy. Yet in the twentieth and early twentyfirst centuries it has become one of the most performed of the ancient tragedies, especially in times of war (for example Sartre (1967) 8–9), made popular by the very elements (its relentless focus on the mourning and lament of the women who have been left to suffer the consequences of war) that led to earlier negative judgments on *Trojan Women*.[1]

1 Background

Euripides produced *Alexandros, Palamedes*, *Trojan Women*, and a satyr play, *Sisyphus* in 415 BCE during the Peace of Nicias while the Athenians were in a brief respite from the Peloponnesian War. We have significant fragments of the *Alexandros*, some evidence about *Palamedes*, but only two fragments of the satyr play (Collard, Cropp, and Gilbert (2004)). We know from ancient sources that *Alexandros* was based on the legend of Paris (Alexander), Priam and Hecuba's son. While pregnant with Paris, Hecuba dreamed that she would give birth to a burning brand; hearing that the dream meant that the child would destroy Troy, the parents gave himto a herdsman to expose, but he raised the child instead (Hyginus *Stories* 91). In the lost play, Hecuba mourns her son; twenty years later, she and Priam establish games in his honor; Paris enters the contest as an anonymous slave and wins. His brother Deiphobos, angry at being bested by a supposed slave, convinces Hecuba and Priam to kill the stranger, but Cassandra (or Hecuba) recognizes him; the play seems to have ended with a reunion between mother and son. *Palamedes* was reputed to be the wisest of the Greeks (Xenophon *Memorabilia* 4.2.33), the inventor of the alphabet and other cultural devices. In the play Odysseus convinces the leaders of the Greek army that Palamedes was a traitor. Before the lie is detected, Palamedes is put to death. His brother sent a message to their father by writing on an oar and setting it out to sea, using Palamedes' invention to salvage his honor.

Trojan Women opens on the beach at Troy at the end of the War; the newly captive Trojan women await their departure to Greece and their new status as slaves. The Greek herald Talthybius arrives to tell them of their allocation to individual Greek men. The first half of the play consists of choral songs and set speeches between Queen Hecuba, who remains on stage throughout, and two of her daughters, Cassandra and Andromache. Talthybius enters in the middle of Andromache's scene to announce that the Greeks have decreed that Astyanax, the last male descendant of the ruling family, shall be put to death. He rips the child from his mother's arms. After a choral song memorializing the two sackings of Troy as well as the great love of

the gods for the Trojans, Menelaus enters to take Helen away. In the ensuing scene, she justifies herself, and Hecuba seeks to convince Menelaus to kill her; Helen departs with Menelaus, but her fate is left hanging (though the audience would have known that she returned to Sparta and lived on). In the end Talthybius brings Astyanax's body to the women for burial; when the ritual is completed, the Trojan women depart for the ships.

It is unusual to have a secure date and know all four plays that were performed at that time. Was the *Trojan Women* part of a trilogy or even a tetralogy? That is, were these plays, like Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, meant to be taken as a whole (Scodel (1980); Lee (1976) x)? I wouldn't make a strong case for this interpretation, but *Alexandros* is clearly relevant to our interpretation of *Trojan Women*. That play highlights the parents' responsibility for the present situation. The life of Paris is perhaps balanced in some ways by the death of Astyanax. *Palamedes* would have contributed to the audience's sense of the failed leadership of the Greek army and the brutality of Odysseus, which are important in *Trojan Women*.

Aelian was stunned that Euripides came in second, losing to Xenocles; he asks whether the judges were stupid or perhaps bribed (*Miscellany* 2.8). But as I said at the outset others have agreed with Gilbert Murray that it was "scarcely even a good play. It is an intense study of one great situation, with little plot, little construction, little or no relief or variety" (Murray (1905) 5; Conacher (1967) 137–45; Burnett (1977) 291; Vellacott (1972) 16; Sartre (1967) 8; Dunn (1996) 101; for summary of the criticism, see Goff (2009) 9–12). The negative criticism of the play may come from some of our assumptions about tragedy. Despite Aristotle's emphasis on plot, Greek tragedy is not just an imitation of an action; we can understand it as a mixture of forms—actors and Chorus, speech and lyric. Thus, while JeanPaul Sartre (1967 xii) faults it as an "oratorio," Nicole Loraux disagrees with him and finds the play's great virtue in its lyricism (Loraux (2002) 8–9). The play can also be defended by questioning our emphasis on the actors, the great heroes of tragedy, which are certainly lacking in this play (du Bois (2004) 76); from this perspective, Troy and the collective of the women may provide the missing unity (Sienkewicz (1978) 85). Part of the criticism about the play's lack of unity and episodic structure focuses on the lack of motivation for the debate between Helen and Hecuba (Schlegel (1871) 179–80; Meridor (2000) 16 notes 1, 3; Grube (1941) 87–89), but that scene does serve the author's purposes, as we will see later. We might also question our definition of and demand for unity. Do plays have to have unity?

Or, as a more political reading would suggest, did Euripides perhaps come second because he offended the Athenians with this play (Loraux (2002) 8; Burian (2009) 4, citing Wilamowitz; cf. Kovacs (1997); Green (1999) 110)? At least since Murray's introduction referred to above, the play has been put in the context of the Peloponnesian War, specifically the attacks on Melos and the Syracuse expedition (416/415). Modern productions often assert that this is the anti war play par excellence, and the playbills claim or assume that Euripides was criticizing the Athenians' behavior at Melos, a Spartan colony that had remained neutral in the war; attacked by Athens, the Melians became actively hostile (Thuc. 5.84). Thucydides makes a set piece, a little play, of the Melian massacre. The Athenians give arguments based on *realpolitik*; they ultimately kill all the men of age and sell the women and children as slaves. Thucydides puts the Melian episode in context, giving us other important information, including the

representation of other relevant episodes: the debate on Mytilene in Book 3. 3, where the Athenians first voted to kill the men and take the women and children prisoner, but then relented; the unsuccessful defense of Plataea, which ended with the Spartans razing the city, killing 200 Plataeans and 25 Athenians, and enslaving the women (4.67). Thucydides ends Book 5 with the Melian surrender and begins Book 6 with this statement: "In the same winter the Athenians resolved to sail again against Sicily. . .and, if possible, to conquer it." He adds that they were ignorant of what they were taking on (6. 1.1). To us this might seem like post hoc/propter hoc—as if the arrogance (hubris) and stupidity arose from the callousness (Murray (1918) 127–32).

But the calendar makes it doubtful that Euripides could have intentionally written his play as a critique of the debate in the Assembly (see Kip (1987) for the chronology; Conacher (1967) 136 note 17), or that he was specifically warning against the upcoming expedition to Syracuse (Kovacs (1997)). If he were awarded his Chorus in the summer, for instance, he would have had to have some idea that he proposed to the judges before Melos. Despite the chronological improbability making the strict connection to Melos unlikely, this interpretation has survived. It appeals to us for a variety of reasons, in part because of our reliance on Thucydides, who makes the most of the event (Rehm (2003) 100). Since the West has lionized the Athenians as the origin of the best that has been thought and written, we are ashamed of their behavior in this instance; Kip ((1987) 417) points out that because we like to think that someone understood what was wrong with these practices, we choose to connect Euripides' play of that year to these events. Barbara Goff ((2009) 33) attributes the success of the interpretation to our romantic ideas of the artist as alienated individual.

Nonetheless, Euripides did write this play while his city was at war. It was a war that shared the practices of the Trojan War: kill the men and enslave the women (and children). There is some connection to ancient Athens, but it is not oneforone. Even if we were sure about the Melian reference, we cannot be sure of how the ancient audience identified: they could have seen themselves as the Achaians, because they behaved like them in Melos; or they could have seen themselves as the Trojans, given that they were similarly treated in the Persian War. And, if there were women in the audience, they might well have responded differently than the men. Given these ambiguities, it is rash to assume a simple antiwar perspective for the play.

The antiwar, antiAthenian reading not only persists, but it has actually countered the aesthetic critique and has spurred modern interest in and performances of the play in times of war (Délèbecque (1951) 245–6). Thus, in an interview with Charlotte Huggins in the *Guardian*, Katie Mitchell states that the play is an articulation of Euripides's "rage" at contemporary events (Huggins (2007)). Critics note that the *Trojan Women* has been taken to refer to Chechnya, Bosnia, Hiroshima, Algeria, as well as currently Afghanistan and Iraq. Program notes commonly make an explicit comparison to present conflicts, and they find Euripides' attention to the fate of women in war productive because it dovetails with contemporary women's movements (Wilmer (2005) xii–xiv; Foley (2004) 77). In her program notes on a performance at Fordham University in 2003, director Rachel Dickstein says that:

> Ellen McLaughlin's new version of *The Trojan Women* infuses this elegiac embrace of a lost home into Euripides' classic tale of suffering and pain. Inspired by the experiences, memories and songs of refugee women from Serbia, Croatia, Albania and Bosnia, Ellen has offered us a lyrical, bracing and hopeful portrait of Troy and its survivors recovering from the most brutal siege of all times.

The members of the cast did research on the *modern* world in preparation for the production.

As I will show in what follows, the ancient play does not take a simple position but rather presents shifting views of war and the treatment of women. Drama is by definition multi voiced; while the play may seem to have a single perspective, analysis of the details of each scene reveals that it is much more complex. Its power lies in that nuanced view. Reading the play for its distance from us as well as for its similarity can make it more informative than a simple piece of propaganda would be.

2 AntiWar

Clearly the play vividly recreates the evil of war in the suffering of Troy and specifically arouses pity for the women and children. The wailing and mourning of the Chorus form the emotional backdrop to the action (especially 97–234, sung with Hecuba), while in the episodes, Cassandra and Andromache express their losses; the death of Astyanax embodies the horror of war and the cruelty of the Greeks.

The antiwar note is sounded from the outset, and it is linked to the women's situation. Poseidon opens the play introducing the themes of suffering and rape caused by war: the city's river echoes with the mourning cries of the women who have been "taken by the spear" and "allotted" to the Greek soldiers (28–9). The costs of defeat are clear: the god draws our attention to the suffering Hecuba, who might have escaped our notice because she lies huddled on the ground, and informs us of the death of Polyxena, Hecuba's youngest daughter, at the tomb of Achilles. He also mentions the violence against women; he says that Agamemnon will take Cassandra by force, abandoning piety (43–4). Sexual violence against women seems to be thematic (Rabinowitz (2011); Gaca (2008, 2015)).

As a result the Greeks' hubris to her and her temples (69)—when Aias raped Cassandra (literally, took her with force [*bia*]), the Achaeans did nothing (70, 71)—Athena has abandoned them and made an alliance with Poseidon to cause storms that will mar their voyage home. It is not simply rape that is the problem for the ancient Greeks, however, for Poseidon closes the prologue with this lesson: "He is stupid, whoever of mortals sacks cities, and temples and tombs, the holy places of the fallen, giving them to desolation, he will be destroyed later" (95–7). The problem with war, then, is that it leads to excess violence, rape, *and* the pillaging of sacred sites; the doer will suffer in turn.

Hecuba lies on the ground; she lifts her head and sings a lament with the Chorus that focuses on the consequences of war for women. They are all victims, and as such they have a choice between life in slavery or death (the possibility of suicide by burning with the city is raised

twice at 301 and 1282). Hecuba stresses the gender of the victims (wives and maidens (143, 144); they will all be slaves (158, 192, 277, 422, 492, 507, 600, 678, 1271, 1280). But important differences of class and status emerge between them. As the former queen, Hecuba's mourning is for the city and its wealth: Troy is no more, and she is no longer the Queen of Troy (99–100, cf. 194–6). She stresses her former grandeur (108, 196), and the songs she used to sing that were appropriate to her royal station. She is enslaved, mourning with her head shaven, as the city burns (140–3, cf. 8–9). Euripides identifies the fall of the city with the rape of the women (Rehm (2002) 182). The ordinary women remember not their possessions but their work at their looms (199–200) (on class, see Rabinowitz, N. (1998); duBois (2004)). There are also differences of age. As an old woman, Hecuba will be a nurse or doorkeeper (194–5); the younger women will be sexual slaves: "I shall have greater labors than these, either approaching the beds of the Hellenes—may that night and its spirit disappear—or as a pitiful servant" (202–4).

If the women suffer slavery and rape in war, the defeated men are killed. The Greek herald Talthybius enters and announces that the Greeks, persuaded by Odysseus, have voted to kill Astyanax, the last remaining child of the family. The immorality of the Greeks and the anti war reading rests on this murder. This is in effect ethnic cleansing: Troy must not rise again, so this child of a noble father must die (723). The murder of Astyanax makes it clear that innocent noncombatants pay with their lives for decisions they never made. Women stand helplessly by while these atrocities are committed (as Cassandra imagined the mistreatment of her body in death at 448–50, so Andromache pictures the body of Astyanax at 774–5). Attention to his sweet flesh highlights both the cost to the defeated and the cruelty of the winning army. Andromache says: "You Hellenes have discovered barbarian evils, why do you kill this child in no way to blame?" (764–5). Greeks distinguished between themselves and the barbarian Other, symbolized by their wars with the Persians in the fifth century. Why would a Trojan princess use this language? Here Euripides has Andromache point up the inconsistency of Greek behavior, but in language that shows her acceptance of Greek standards of behavior. There is an underlying ethnocentrism in these lines.

Supporting the antiwar reading, even the Greek messenger, Talthybius, is sympathetic to the Trojans; he says that the one announcing such things has to be pitiless and shameless (786–8). Thus, he seems to make clear the antiwar message. The play ends with the arrival of Talthybius bearing the corpse of Astyanax, who has been "thrown from the towers like a ring" (1121). The transformation of the beloved child, whom we last saw in the embrace of his mother, into an object to be hurled in a game, reiterates the point: this is truly the end of the city, which has been mourned from the play's opening by Poseidon. The sympathetic Talthybius has already bathed the boy (1150–52); the adornment of the body and its laying out are enacted on stage. Hecuba's speech over the corpse, and her instructions to the Chorus, engage the audience's sympathy; she relates the strength of the heroic Hector, the tireless fighter for the city, to the small broken body of the child, thrown from its walls. The shield of the father that failed to protect the boy will provide his tomb. In this scene, the devastation of war is stressed by an emphasis on the way it contradicts reproductive sexuality; war marks the end of their lineage. Like mothers who mourn (Alcestis, Medea), the grandmother emphasizes the marriage

Astyanax would have made had he lived, as well as the contrast between the body of her son Hector alive and Hector's shield (1194–99). As Andromache called the Greeks barbarian for killing the child (764–5), now Hecuba scorns them as cowards, afraid of a little boy (1158–66). "What would a poet write on your grave? Here is the child that the Argives killed because they feared him? An inscription shameful to the Greeks!" (1188–91).

The Greeks, however, were not irrational in their decision; they simply followed the dreadful logic of vengeance. Indeed, Hecuba had hoped that Astyanax would have reestablished Troy (703–5). If he had lived, Astyanax would likely have been driven by the heroic code of ethics to try to punish the aggressors. The overall message, if there is one, is not clear, however. The response of Talthybius to the murder of Astyanax could have led Athenians to ask "what are we doing in our empire?," but it is not certain that the men in the audience would have identified with the Greek army led by Odysseus, rather than the lowly herald and the vanquished Trojans.

And even at this most pitiful and pitiable moment, Euripides does not emphasize the horror of war in general (see also Kovacs (1997) 165–6). Hecuba blames Helen and the gods (1214, 1240–5, 1280–1). Earlier in the play, there are other shadings of meaning. The Trojan women consider some men more desirable than others as masters (for example Hecuba also bewails her fate as the servant of Odysseus because he is duplicitous and lawless, 282–7), and dying for the fatherland is the most glorious end (395–7 about Hector). The Chorus points out the differences between one Greek location and another. They hope to go to Athens, or Peneus, or Sicily (205–29). Euripides here works in praise for Athens at the same time that he adds lyric embellishment and softens their fate. In short, he does not make the worst case possible against all war or all men.

Other scenes go so far as to justify war and the nationalism that motivates it. We have already seen Andromache's Hellenism. Cassandra is introduced as a maenad, raving and waving torches, but she settles down and, speaking in a calm voice, she justifies the war. Because she has shifted from ecstatic to rational discourse, we cannot easily dismiss her strange view of the war (365–6) as mad (Roisman (1997) 40–1). Cassandra first says that no one thinking rightly would want war (400), but she nonetheless accepts the ideal of noble death: "to die well brings no shameful crown to the city, and dying badly brings ill fame" (401–2). Having blamed the Hellenes for what they have done, she consoles her mother by arguing, first, that the Trojans are happier than the Achaeans—they have died at home and died with glory for their fatherland (386–7). Then, she claims that without the war, the Trojans would have had no glory. In particular she mentions Hector, whose death is so painful to Hecuba (394), arguing that he died with the best reputation because the Achaeans came (395–6). Finally she says that if Paris had just married an ordinary woman, no one would have heard of him, implying that his marriage was worthwhile (this perspective will be echoed later by Helen). Euripides is not just engaging in specious reasoning, since the underlying message was actually true for epic heroes, who valued glory in death very highly.

3 Women as Victim or Heroic

What about the play's treatment of women? (On gender and women in Euripides, see Mueller in this volume.) As I mentioned earlier, the play seems to support contemporary ideas about war: defeat leads to rape for women. But not only do the women differentiate between men, but the language of rape slips over into the language of marriage. Talthybius announces that each woman has been assigned to a man (Rehm (2005)). Not surprisingly, he does not emphasize rape. Instead, he conflates marriage and illicit union, saying that Agamemnon has chosen Cassandra (249), not as a slave, but for "shadowy marital bedding" (252). When Hecuba stresses the sacrilege (ominous from the prologue)—the god allowed her to stay an unmarried maiden (253, 254); now she might as well throw down her sacred garb (256–8)—Talthybius calls these royal unions (the word for bed is used here, 259), implying that Cassandra is fortunate.

Significantly, Cassandra agrees with him, and Euripides has also integrated the fluidity of meaning into the structure. When Talthybius sees the flames, he fears that the women might be doing violence to themselves and the city (301–2). Hecuba assures him that it is only her raving daughter Cassandra, running toward them, carrying torches, like a maenad (giving the traditional cry to Dionysus, 326); she simultaneously celebrates a wedding (calling on Hymen and Hekate 314, 322, 323). She calls her sexual slavery "a royal wedding" and "blessed" (311–13); she ends her speech calling her captor "husband" with the unambiguous term *posis* (341). Talthybius leads her off, again calling it a marriage (*numpheuma*, 420). She echoes his language, but relates it to death, for she is hurrying to her wedding in Hades, claiming her bridegroom (*numphiôi gêmômetha*, 445).

Hecuba makes clear the irony of the term marriage in this situation: "I never thought that you would make such a marriage at the point of an Argive spear" (346–7). It is a union, but one made by force. She emphasizes the gap between the marriages she intended for these girls and the fate they suffer: nurtured for carefully selected bridegrooms, they have been ripped from her hands (484–6). The girls are "picked out" (*exaireton*) not for lawful marriage but for shadowy unions. In her calm speech with Andromache, Hecuba says Cassandra was taken from her by force (617), making it clear just what sort of a "marriage" this was.

There is the possibility that the noble women at least would have been recognized as concubines; in classical Athens *pallakai* ("concubines") had social status. They were protected from adultery as wives were (Lysias1.31), and could produce free (if not citizen) children (Demosthenes 23.53.5); they were different from prostitutes (*pornai* or *hetairai*) because they could reside within the house (PseudoDemosthenes 59.118). Thus, these women, victims of rape originally, take up residence in the household; they destabilize the family unit and cause difficulties when there is also a wife, as we see in numerous cases in Greek tragedy (for instance, Aeschylus' *Oresteia*; Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*; and Euripides' *Medea* and *Andromache*). Euripides uses Cassandra, then, to point out the cost of war, but the fact of sexual slavery is minimized by this slippage between the language of marriage and rape.

So far the play has not taken a strong position about war as a whole or the rape of women in war. Does it show us women active and resistant (as contemporary playbills sometimes

claim)? Cassandra knows that this supposed marriage will be destructive (311–13). She embraces it not madly but because through it she will kill Agamemnon and take revenge for her brothers (360, 357–58, 404–5). Cassandra converts her status as a bride (to be looked at and admired 308), to that of a winner in the game of revenge; her death will crown her with victory (460, cf. 353). But Cassandra is exceptional; she is both the servant of Apollo and wild like the women who follow Dionysus (on Dionysiac Cassandra, see Papadopoulou (2000) 515–17). As such she can resist, ecstatically looking forward to a death that will accomplish her family's revenge. But as an exception, she does not model resistance for others.

Moreover, Cassandra exits early in the play, and the later tone is one of defeat. Andromache, the wife of Hector, is a more ordinary figure, the ideal wife and mother. She unites a strong statement about the horror of war with complicity. She is clearly part of the war booty, entering on a chariot with the material spoils. Andromache is virtuous and compliant. Because she embodied the ideal of female virtue for Greek woman, Andromache caught the attention of Neoptolemos, son of Achilles, her husband's murderer. When she asks her motherinlaw how she should act toward him, Hecuba advises her not to resist but to try to charm her captor (699) so that Astyanax can live to refound Troy: "Let go of Hector's suffering. . .doing these things you will cheer your friends and bring your son up to be a great blessing to Troy, so that if it is possible there will be more children born from you to settle Troy, and the city may yet exist" (701–5). Andromache hates this advice, but the scene makes it clear that she has a limited range of action (Scodel 1998).

4 The Love Charm

The play does not unsettle gendered norms of behavior, it builds on them. At this emotional low point, when the audience has just watched the child wrenched from his mother's arms, the Chorus sings a song about the pointlessness of the lofty history of Troy (its walls built by Apollo, Ganymede beloved of Zeus, Tithonos beloved of Dawn). They end with regret for the loss of all Troy's love charms (*philtra* 859). But we are about to see a Greek/Trojan love charm in action, for the ode leads into the arrival of first Menelaus and then Helen, who still possesses great erotic power (on the ode, see Burnett (1977)).

Menelaus is never heroic in tragedy; here he enters defending his manliness, claiming that he didn't really pursue Helen to Troy (his reputation as being uxorious plagues him) but instead sought the man who had wronged him (865–6). Given that the army gave Helen to him to kill or bring home, he claims that he is going to bring her home and then kill her (874–9). He further tries to show himself a man by ordering violence against her (he bids the servants drag her out by her hair, 882).

Hecuba wants Menelaus to kill Helen on the spot; she is afraid that he will be seduced from his purpose, so she urges him: "Run away, don't look at her, lest she overpower you with desire; for she overpowers the eyes of men, she thoroughly takes possession of cities, she burns homes; such are the charms she has. I know her, and you do, and all those who have suffered know her as well" (890–894). Blaming Helen was a popular pastime in antiquity; for instance,

Aeschylus has his Chorus punningly point out in the *Agamemnon*: "Whoever named you thus completely truly?. . . Helen fittingly destroyer of ships, of men, of cities" (*helenaus, helandras, heleptolis*, 689–90). She has been spoken of often; whether she is the daughter of Tyndareus (34, 766) or Zeus (398), her marriage (or her bed) has caused the death of Priam (134–6), and destruction and suffering to Greeks and barbarians alike (771, 781). She lives up to her reputation for beauty, entering dressed to the nines (1022–3)—the other women are in rags—asking what will happen to her; Menelaus replies that she has been given to him to kill (902).

When Helen asks leave to justify herself, Menelaus initially refuses, saying he didn't come to exchange arguments with her but to slay her. At this point, to the shock of the audience and critics, Hecuba intervenes and says "let her speak." Why? Her claim is that Menelaus won't weaken if he knows what Helen has done to the Trojans. In other words, she hopes to strengthen Menelaus' resolve. Recognizing Helen's sexual power, Hecuba still trusts in words or arguments. As unlikely as that may be, obviously Euripides stands to gain something by staging this scene. On the authorial level (Rabinowitz, P. (1987)), he perhaps gains a reputation for skill in argument (Meridor (2000) 27), but more importantly, he also gets to air the question of who is to blame for the suffering we have witnessed. He may be participating in a philosophical debate here, since Gorgias in his dialogue *Helen* offered four reasons why Helen is not responsible for her behavior (on the relevance of Gorgias, see Croally (1994) 155; Gregory (1991) 158–75, 180 note 7, 181 note 43; Conacher (1998); Spatharas (2002)).

At first, Helen's arguments seem preposterous and would have seemed more so in performance given her dress; she also has the weaker position in debate, speaking first, so that her opponent has the last word (Spatharas 2002). But it is not so clear who wins. Helen first blames Hecuba and Priam for having given life to Paris. The original audience would have seen *Alexandros*, and they would not dismiss the parents' responsibility lightly. Second, she says nothing was her fault. She goes all the way back to the mythic Beauty Contest, in which Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite each offered a bribe to Paris to choose her as most beautiful. If Paris had chosen political power and not love, the contest might have meant defeat for the Greeks, but instead they are free, not ruled by barbarians (933, cf. Cassandra on the glory they won 386, 395). She only went with Paris because the goddess was with him, and who is stronger than the gods, she asks. Finally, she claims that she tried to leave over and over again. She concludes with another reference to the gods.

Hecuba does not address Helen's first point at all, perhaps because she can't (Meridor (2000) 17). Moreover, she seems as inconsistent as Helen herself. Having questioned the efficacy of the gods and blamed them (469–70, 612–13), she now defends the goddesses, saying that they would not bargain with people's lives to win a beauty contest. Then she denies that the goddess made Helen do anything. Simple lust for Paris and greed for Phrygian gold incited her (991–3).

We can't take her statement as the last word, however. The Greeks on the whole believed in the gods, and the play opened with the physical presence of two deities who took responsibility for the fall of Troy and the destiny of the troops on their way home. Nonetheless, on the narrative level, the contest between the beautiful young woman and the decrepit old one,

seems to end in victory for Hecuba. As Ra'anana Meridor points out, Euripides gave her "free rein" ((2000) 21). Menelaus says he agrees with Hecuba (1036, 1053).

But he soon weakens. Though Menelaus at first threatens Helen with immediate stoning (1039) so as to avoid shame (1041), after she touches him in supplication (1042), he decides to act only when they reach home. The audience is aware that he won't do that. In one of the funnier exchanges in tragedy, Hecuba begs him not to go in the same ship with her; Menelaus replies: "why? Has she gained weight?" (1050). Hecuba must now recognize the victory of sexual love (1051), which she feared earlier (890–1). She wins only a concession that they will travel separately. The ancient audience must have known that Helen did not die in transit, and thus that Hecuba has lost (see Dunn (1996) 114).

In leaving, Menelaus struts proudly, claiming that in killing Helen he will teach all women to be chaste (1056–7). In this play we can see how blaming Helen leads to controlling women. Cassandra and Andromache blamed Helen (372–3, 766–73), but they have also blamed the men who pursued her (368–9, 764). In this scene, Helen alone is held responsible. Furthermore, the words that Hecuba and the Chorus use contribute to the vindication of the army and vilification of all women. Hecuba addresses Helen, describing the shame she should feel and the way her comportment should reflect it (1025–8). That might be fair enough since the Trojan women all believe that she went with Paris of her own volition (372–3). But Hecuba goes on "Crown Greece worthily killing this one yourself, setting up a law for other women: she dies, whoever betrays her husband" (1030–2). The Chorus echoes her and uses Menelaus' masculine pride to goad him to action (1033–5). Thus by blaming Helen, Hecuba and Chorus are complicit in the further taming of women.

5 Neither Simply Antiwar nor Simply Feminist

Euripides has not then written a feminist antiwar tract, though the play does make clear the costs of war. It shows that the victors become vicious; they are "barbarian" in the pejorative meaning of the word, that is, war makes them behave like their construction of the "Other." The women survive, but the ancient play does not seem to me, as a production at Kalamazoo University claimed, like a "celebration of the human spirit and the will to survive when faced with terror, brutality and loss" (www.wmich). While the virginal Cassandra, possessed by the gods, can be a radical, in general women are powerless and compliant. The ideals of Athenian womanhood are stated clearly by Andromache, and though their ironic use is marked, they are not challenged. More important, the game of blaming Helen leads to the restatement of clichés about women's lack of chastity.

Although the play does not unsettle Greek ethnocentrism and masculinity, it did, like Aeschylus' *Persians*, require that Greek men in the audience sympathize with nonGreeks, and like some of his other plays, with women (see Zeitlin (1996)). They would probably not have identified with the losers, especially since Athens is singled out for praise (see above, section 2), but they might have identified with Talthybius, who specifically raises the question of sympathy. Could the play have convinced them to treat their enemies with more respect out

of fear that this might happen to them?

Without assuming that Euripides was criticizing the Melian massacre or the Syracusan expedition, we can still use the play to take a more critical look at what we are doing in our own wars. Are we becoming like our enemy? By making heroes of the war dead, do we like Cassandra make it more likely that wars will continue to be fought? The slippage between the language of marriage and rape can lead the audience to reflect on rape as a weapon in modern wars; seeing Andromache we might be more sympathetic to the women in occupied Germany and France who thought that prostitution was preferable to rape, as in the 2008 film *A Woman in Berlin*. It can lead us to ask how different marriage is from rape in much of the world where women have no choice and are married at a very young age.

6 Mortal and Immortal

In my emphasis so far on war and women, I have slighted a very important dimension of the play—it raises large philosophical questions about the role of mortals and gods in human suffering. The opening of the play establishes the divine context for the play we are about to see and determines the future of the characters. Poseidon, the god of the sea, is the first speaker. Now however Poseidon is preparing to leave because he, like the Trojans he supported in the war, has been conquered (23, 25). Active in the past, he can only watch as the city goes up in smoke (8). The gods leave the stage, but their physical presence here at the outset has to color our reading of the rest of the play: this is a world dominated by larger forces, but those forces are fickle (in the case of Athena), and in contest with one another because this is a polytheistic system.

Near the end of the play, Hecuba prays to Zeus with these strange words (884–7): “whether you are the necessity of nature or the mind of men.” This speech (reminiscent of the Sophist Protagoras, for which see Hall (2010) 178–82) echoes her earlier point: though the gods are bad allies, we call on them when we are in trouble (469–71). Modern versions (as opposed to translations) may cut the first scene because the physical presence of gods is difficult for modern audiences to accept (Sartre, however, opened and closed with Poseidon). But that scene reveals, first, that there are wider forces at work (for example the gods will act through the weather) in cases where humans like to think we are the authors of our own fate, and, second, that there are consequences of excess violence—in the words of Malcolm X, the chickens come home to roost, whether in the form of vengeance or the gods’ retribution.

In sum, the reasons for continuing to bother with this play are not its clear message but its complexity. Works of art are not propaganda and as such don’t often move the audience to action. In antiquity, *Trojan Women* was supposed to have aroused the tyrant Alexander to tears but not to action (Plutarch *Pelopidas* 29.5; Goff (2009) 11–16). By arousing emotions in an audience, a work of art can, however, have an indirect effect. Hecuba and the Chorus repeatedly sing about the power of song and dance, while they are singing and dancing (see Papadopoulou (2000) 518 on contrasting songs). Throughout the play there are elements that lead the audience to think about it as a play—would the audience hearing reference to the tents

(*skene*) think of the set (*skene*)? Do such references prompt the audience to think about the power of tragedy itself?[2] In the final moments, Hecuba goes from mourning her city to predicting that others will sing of it in the future (1242–5, cf. Cassandra 395–6). The play we have been watching/reading is the song she refers to. Perhaps then that is the best outcome a play can hope for: to memorialize that which would otherwise be forgotten, not to change political behavior.

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FURTHER READING

In addition to the items referred to, and the general texts on Euripides with chapters on the play, the following will be useful for those interested in special aspects of the play. Conacher (1967) discusses the play as part of a trilogy, as does Murray (1946) in his chapter, “The Trojan Trilogy,” and Webster (1967). In addition to Goff’s new introduction to the play (2009), readers can consult K.H. Lee’s (1976) introduction and edition of the Greek text, while Shirley Barlow contributed an edition with facingpage translation in the Aris and Phillips series (1986). Edith Hall has an excellent introduction to Morwood’s translation (2000). Barlow (1971) is a classic consideration of image patterns, especially for those who would like to follow up on, for instance, the deployment of fire in the play. There is much written on Helen, but Stinton (1965) gives the mythic background. Readers who wish to pursue the question of women’s role in lament in Greek tragedy and culture, should read Seremetakis (1991), Warhaft (1992), Alexiou (2000), McClure (1999), Lardinois and McClure (2001), and Dué (2006).

NOTE

1 This essay incorporates and expands on earlier considerations of the play in more focused contexts (Rabinowitz, N. 2011, Rabinowitz, N. 2014). I wish to thank Robin Mitchell Boyask for the invitation to contribute to the volume, Laura McClure for her efforts in bringing the project to fruition, as well as my research assistant, Courtney Kaplar, for help in preparing the manuscript for publication.

CHAPTER 15
Iphigenia in Tauris

Jennifer Clarke Kosak

Iphigenia in Tauris abounds in irony and deception and at the same time depicts characters seriously invested in the wellbeing of their families. The play, in which Euripides dramatizes the intersection and final resolution of the Orestes and Iphigenia myths, takes place in Tauris, a region on the northern shores of the Black Sea, where the goddess Artemis has transported Iphigenia, having rescued her from sacrifice on the altar at Aulis by substituting a deer in her place. Iphigenia serves as priestess of Artemis in this "barbarian" land, where the goddess's cult has as its peculiar feature human sacrifice, and, what is more, sacrifice of foreigners; she is supported in her actions by a group of captured Greek women who serve as templeslaves and comprise the Chorus. The action of the play begins when Orestes, still tormented by the Furies after murdering Clytemnestra and accompanied by his cousin Pylades, arrives in pursuit of the goddess' cult statue; he has been told by the oracle of Apollo that bringing the statue to Athens will finally put an end to his suffering. Captured by local herdsmen, the two young men are brought before Iphigenia, and the exciting recognition scene begins. Because Orestes was very young when Iphigenia was sacrificed at Aulis and many years have since passed, the family members do not recognize one another, nor do they immediately identify themselves by name. The threat of sacrifice looms near. However, Iphigenia, discovering that the young men are Greeks from Argos and that at least some members of her family are still alive, decides to save one of the two so that he may convey the news of her whereabouts back to Greece and thus, she hopes, effect her rescue. Using the ingenious device of a letter whose contents are spoken aloud by Iphigenia, Euripides enables the siblings to recognize one another at last. However, once this discovery is made, the characters must devise an escape strategy that enables the theft of the cult statue, the survival of Orestes and Pylades and the rescue of Iphigenia. Iphigenia comes up with a plan that puts Orestes' recent killing of Clytemnestra to good use: she explains to Thoas, the king of the Taurians, that the young men are polluted and must be purified, along with the cult statue which, she says, they have touched. Taking the cult statue, she leads Orestes and Pylades away from the temple towards the seashore. The last part of the play features only Taurian mortals on stage: a messenger arrives to tell Thoas that the Greeks have embarked upon the ship that had brought Orestes and Pylades there and have attempted to take off. Neither the sea nor the Taurians are cooperating with the plan, however, and the three are about to be captured when Athena arrives as *dea ex machina*; she instructs Thoas to let them leave and tells Orestes and Iphigenia what to do on their return to Greece: Orestes is to establish the cult of Artemis at Halae in Athens and Iphigenia is to become priestess of Artemis at Brauron. The barbarian king submits readily to Athena's authority, and the play ends with salvation (*sôtêria*) for the three escapees and praise for Athena from the Chorus.

An exotic locale, a longlost sister, a crazed brother, human sacrifice, suspense, danger,

divine intervention: these features certainly make for an exciting play. Its appeal was clear in antiquity: although, in comparison with some Euripidean dramas, the play is not widely quoted by ancient authors, Aristophanes may have been quick to parody it in his *Thesmophoriazusae* (1160–1125; cf. Bobrick (1991)) and quotes the opening two lines in *Frogs* (1232–33); Aristotle (to whom we shall return) mentions it several times in the *Poetics*. The numerous ancient vase and wallpaintings that drew upon the play for inspiration likewise indicate that it remained popular from the fourth century BCE at least up through the second century CE, despite the fact that it was not one of the ten selected Euripidean plays that were most widely read in antiquity. Its combination of intense emotion and thrilling suspense surely prove attractive to modern audiences as well, but nonetheless many aspects continue to provide challenges to interpretation. A number of questions about the play persist: what elements in the myth are newly constructed by Euripides? What is the relationship between the cults mentioned in the play and cults practiced historically in both Attica and Tauris? When was the play first performed and how might it reflect contemporary Athenian political and social concerns? To what extent can the play, with its "happy" ending, be understood as tragic? How should the frequent invocation of the concept of salvation (*sôtêria, sôizein*) inform our understanding of the play? How do we interpret the characterization of Orestes, Iphigenia, and Pylades, both within the play and in comparison with their counterparts in other tragedies dealing with the myths of the house of Tantalus? What are we to make of the plaintive remarks of the Chorus regarding their own suffering, rendered secondary to that of the elite characters? In the following discussion, while recognizing that there are both more questions to be asked and further answers to be given, I shall sketch out some preliminary or provisional answers to these questions.

1 The Myths

Although not mentioned in Homer's *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*, the sacrifice of a daughter of Clytemnestra (identified as Iphimede) by the Achaeans, along with rescue through substitution (of a phantom) occurs in Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women* (fr. 23a MerkelbachWest). The archaic poem the *Cypria* seems to have included the sacrifice of Iphigenia at Aulis, together with the attendant ruse of marriage to Achilles, the stories of the substitute deer and the transport of Iphigenia to Tauris but with the final detail that Iphigenia was immortalized there (Proclus, *Chrestomathia*, p. 32 Davies). In many fifthcentury accounts (cf. Pindar, *Pythian* 11.22–23; Aeschylus *Agamemnon*, 184–257, 1412–21, 1555–59, Sophocles *Electra* 530–76; Euripides *Electra* 1018–29), Iphigenia actually dies in the sacrifice at Aulis, but Herodotus states that the Taurians worship Iphigenia as a goddess and perform sacrifices of shipwrecked sailors and captured Greeks in her honor (4.103). According to Hyginus, Sophocles' *Chryses* included the story of Orestes and Iphigenia escaping from Tauris with Thoas in pursuit; this play may have been composed before *Iphigenia in Tauris* and could thus be an important source for the blending of the siblings' myths, but some scholars have expressed doubts about the reliability of Hyginus' account. In fact, Marshall (2009) has recently argued that it is the Sophoclean play which is later, presenting further developments of the myth presented in *Iphigenia in Tauris*. Euripides may thus have been the first to send Orestes to Tauris to

retrieve the statue and to end up bringing Iphigenia back to Greece; furthermore, he is probably the first to retain Iphigenia's mortality in Tauris (for discussions of the mythic background, see Platnauer (1938) xii–xiii; Cropp (2000) 43–46; Bremmer (2001); Kyriakou (2006) 19–23).

Several aetiological myths also play a prominent role in the drama—indeed, if one wants to argue that the use of aetiological myths is a feature particularly characteristic of Euripidean drama, there is plenty of evidence for that view here. Moreover, most of such myths told in *Iphigenia in Tauris* explain the background of certain cults or rituals (Wolff (1992) 308), including the story of Orestes' connection to the Choes festival and the roles of Orestes and Iphigenia in the cults of Artemis at Halae and Brauron respectively. However, the relationship between the Euripidean aetiologies and the historical cults is a vexed question. The connection between Iphigenia and Brauron has attracted particular attention. Athena proclaims: "And it is necessary that you, Iphigenia, serve this goddess [sc. Artemis] as keykeeper in the holy Brauronian meadows, where you will be buried when you have died, and they will set up as an offering to you the finetextured weavings of cloaks which women dying in childbirth leave in their homes" (1462–1467). Kyriakou ((2006) 458 *ad* 1462–67a) summarizes the central problem here: "Such a tomb or cult of Iphigeneia at Brauron is not attested elsewhere and the archaeological record has failed to substantiate Euripides' report." Nor can Iphigenia be directly tied to the *arkteia* ritual held at Brauron (a ritual performed by younger girls that involved both dressing as bears and running naked from "bears"), although attempts to make such connections are certainly attractive (SourvinouInwood (1997); Tzanetou (2000)). Indeed, in recent years, several scholars have argued that Euripides has invented the aetiologies himself in order to serve his interests within the play itself and should not—or at least need not—be used as evidence for actual Athenian cult history or cult practices (Scullion (2000) 217–33; Dunn (2000); Ekroth (2003); Kyriakou (2006) 24–30; cf. Wolff (1992)); but others find it impossible to believe that Euripides could have invented them without some actual connection to cultic activities at Brauron; perhaps, as Seaford ((2009) 233) suggests, the evidence has been lost.

The extent to which the rituals of human sacrifice described in the play reflect the historical realities of the cult of Artemis in Tauris is likewise a difficult question to answer—though I suggest that despite the centrality of human sacrifice in the play, the question of historical accuracy in this matter is actually less important for interpretation than in the case of the aetiological myths of Athenian cults. This is both because the concept of human sacrifice is an essential ingredient of the Iphigenia myth, whether it was performed at Tauris or not, and because the reality of the cult in that faraway land is less important than its role in the play as a marker of Taurian barbarism in contrast to Greek civilization (see Torrance in this volume). The human sacrifice theme provides rich irony for Iphigenia herself—the sacrificed turned sacrificer—and is at the heart of a similarly ironic or at least ambivalent set of contrasts between the Greeks and the Taurians. Thus, cruelty, deceptiveness, excess, despotism, sacrilege, and gullibility are all cast as barbarian characteristics in fifthcentury literature (Hall (1989)) and yet throughout the play, Euripides presents us with Taurians who defy such stereotypes (Wright (2005) 198–201; Kyriakou (2006) 35). So Thoas is a king eager to maintain correct religious practices, respectful of Iphigenia and concerned for his people; the

Taurian herdsman and messenger are neither foolish (the second messenger is not deceived by the Greeks) nor cowardly (both men present a willingness to fight for their own interests). Moreover, the Taurian kingdom, although isolated, has a city (*polis*, 464, 595, 877 [rejected by Cropp (2000)], 1209, 1212, 1214) and ships (1427), among other important features of civilization, and therefore does not align easily with the nomadic existence of its Scythian neighbors, so memorably described by Herodotus (especially 4.46). The Taurians, despite their insistence on human sacrifice, do not exemplify primitive barbarism in the same way that Scythians do (on Scythian barbarism, see Hartog (1988); on intersections between Scythia and Tauris in ancient Greek and Roman texts, see Hall (2012) 66–68).

Moreover, the play's portrait of the Greeks themselves complicates the contrast. A fundamental issue is Iphigenia's involvement in human sacrifice. The Greek characters in the play insist that sacrificing humans to honor Artemis is not only wrong, it is barbarian; and yet, Iphigenia's own history with her father at Aulis tells a rather different story. Of course, as Iphigenia herself tells us, the sacrifice at Aulis did not actually reach completion: Artemis saved her. The goddess' action may suggest that Calchas was wrong to propose the sacrifice in the first place. Furthermore, in the course of the play, Iphigenia and her fellow Greeks frequently condemn Taurian customs. Indeed, Iphigenia argues that it is not Artemis who demands these sacrifices, but the Taurians themselves: "I think that the people here, being themselves manslaying, transfer their baseness onto the goddess; for I think that none of the gods are evil" (389–91). Nonetheless, Iphigenia has apparently not refused to sacrifice anyone in the past; now, believing Orestes is dead, she says she has become hardened against her victims (351) and wishes that she had the chance to sacrifice Helen in return for the cruel fate she herself has suffered (354–360). Her motivation in participating in the sacrifice threatened in the play is thus vengeance, not piety; vengeance may provide a motivation acceptable to the Greek audience, but it is surely a twisted form of vengeance to engage in sacrificial acts that are deemed repellant. Such perversions of sacrificial ritual are not surprising in Euripides (see Foley (1985); Henrichs (2000)), but they are perversions nonetheless. Moreover, Iphigenia intends to sacrifice both Pylades and Orestes until she discovers that saving one of them will benefit her; thereafter, we learn that she is confident she can persuade Thoas to let one of them go. Late in the play, the messenger describes how she "raised an ululation and sang barbarian songs, acting the magician, as though she were indeed washing away the bloodguilt" (1337–38). Although the play insists there is a difference between Greek and barbarian, at the same time it poses the question: if Iphigenia is willing to go so far as to perform human sacrifice, what is the distinction between the imitation of barbarian practices and their actuality?

2 The Play within the Euripidean Corpus

No external evidence provides a firm date for *Iphigenia in Tauris*; however, Cropp and Fick's analysis ((1985) 23) of the play's metrics indicate a date between 417 and 412, and Cropp ((2000) 60–62) argues further for a date of either 414 or 413. Because of many similarities in theme and structure, the play certainly invites comparison with *Helen*, firmly dated to 412; as Cropp summarizes:

> Each has a Greek princess vanishing at the start of the Trojan War, stranded amongst barbarians, reunited with her longlost brother (Orestes) or husband (Menelaus), and escaping with him back to Greece. Each proceeds from the heroine's despair (believing husband/brother dead), through a confrontation based on this misconception, to recognition, escapeplanning, deception of the barbarian king, escape, and resolution of a final complication by an intervening god.
>
> (Cropp (2000) 61)

Kyriakou ((2006) 41) adds that in both plays it is the heroines who plan the escape and enlist the support of the Chorus, comprised in both plays of Greek women slaves. Indeed some scholars even argue that the two plays were produced in the same year (see most recently Hose (1995) 14–17, 190–97 and Wright (2005) 44–55), but most scholars maintain that the similarities are instead evidence of the opposite conclusion (for example Plautnauer (1938) xv–xvi; Cropp (2000) 61; Marshall (2009) 145). Even if the plays did not form part of an "escapetragedy" trilogy, Wright's discussion of *Iphigenia in Tauris*, *Helen* and the fragmentary *Andromeda* reveals a shared focus on a particular set of interconnected themes:

> Myth, geography, ethnicity, philosophy, and theology are not separate, distinct areas of interest, but are all integrally joined together to form an intricate nexus of ideas. Central to all these themes are . . . the power of illusion, the failure of language and myth to express reality, and the problems of knowledge and personal existence.
>
> (Wright (2005) 386)

While the exact date and performance circumstances remain in doubt, the play likewise shares its themes of mistaken or unknown identity, recognition, and escape from lifethreatening danger with several additional Euripidean tragedies dating to the later part of his career, including not only *Helen* and *Andromeda* of 412, but also *Ion* (circa 414) and the fragmentary plays *Captive Melanippe* (circa 412), *Hypsipyle* (circa 410–408) and *Antiope* (circa 409/08). Aristophanes' *Birds* (414) shows a similar concern with escape—though in the opposite direction: Iphigenia wishes to get home to Greece, whereas the Aristophanic characters Euelpides and Peisthetaerus are trying to get away from it. It is certainly tempting to read such themes against the backdrop of historical and political developments in Athens, in particular, the massive, and ultimately disastrous, military campaign against Sicily of 415–413 and the subsequent internal political struggles. Indeed, if *Iphigenia in Tauris* does date to 414–413, it was potentially both composed and performed in the course of the Sicilian expedition, during which the Athenians, despite their enthusiasm for the effort, suffered setbacks almost immediately. *Iphigenia in Tauris*, with its constant emphasis on both *sôtêria* (salvation, rescue, escape) and *tychê* (chance, luck) may reflect serious concerns with the war effort; however, it is difficult to go much further with this line of interpretation—other than to suggest that the play may provide useful lenses with which to view the actions and decisions of the city at this juncture of the Peloponnesian war.

Like many Euripidean tragedies, the play explores issues of appearance and reality, chance, reason and necessity, harsh, unpredictable deities, human responsibility, and the connections between individual character and family history. But like plays such as *Helen* and *Ion*,

Iphigenia in Tauris approaches these topics with a tone that is hard to characterize: a blend of sadness, optimism, terror, joy, sentimentality, and detachment. The horrific actions committed by Orestes and Iphigenia, their parents, and their ancestors are recognized, but in a curiously impassive way: remarked upon, but then set aside as inevitable and therefore not to be heavily criticized. Thus, Iphigenia both deplores her role as sacrificer and accepts it, maintains her father's attempt to sacrifice her was "unfatherly" (864) and at the same time feels no anger towards him (993–94), and laments both her mother's actions and her death (556). Orestes despairs of Apollo's support and at the same time follows his instructions, frequently speaks of acting bravely but also wants to run away (102–03), and mentions killing his mother (956) but repeatedly tries to suppress or refuses to give any information about her story (so 554, 925, 927, 940). Even the opening lines (1–9), in which Iphigenia rehearses her family history, leave out as much as they include: she mentions Tantalus (in adjectival form as the father of Pelops), but not his story, Pelops' marriage with Hippodameia but not the contest for her hand, Atreus' begetting of Agamemnon and Menelaus but not his confrontation with Thyestes. Thus, she omits all the controversial parts of the family history until she comes to speak of the sacrifice at Aulis ("my father sacrificed [*esphaxen*] me, as it is believed, for Helen's sake to Artemis in the famous folds of Aulis" [8–9]; the verb used for sacrifice, *sphazein*, "carries associations of bloodshed and violence" [Henrichs (2000) 180])—but when she goes on to describe that event in detail, she does not say whether her father had a role in the sacrifice itself. The reticence of the play on many aspects of family history is striking: as Kyriakou puts it, "The play suppresses the family past so consistently and extensively that it glosses over not only criminal but also nontraumatic and or salubrious events" (Kyriakou (2006) 11 n. 7; cf. also Burnett (1971) 63–64). It is also remarkable in light of the emphasis on the inherited curse of the house that we see in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, for example, or in the prologue to Euripides' *Orestes*, where Electra provides a much gloomier portrait of the family history. At the same time, it seems that Iphigenia and Orestes cannot help but replicate the history (especially as dramatized in other plays) that they refuse to tell. Thus, Iphigenia dreams of Orestes as Clytemnestra did in *Choephori*, mourns for the dead Orestes as Electra did in Sophocles' *Electra* (see further Cropp (2000) 175–76 *ad* 42–66 and 183 *ad* 123–42), and, most significantly, prepares to sacrifice Orestes as her father would have sacrificed her (on the many parallels between these sacrifices, see further Sansone (1975)). Some critics, noting the emphasis on Pelops in the play, also draw parallels between Pelops and Iphigenia, both 'killed' by their fathers (Sansone (1975) 290) or Pelops and Orestes, with Orestes' rescue of his sister from the barbarian king reflecting Pelops' actions in winning the hand of Hippodameia from her vicious father (O'Brien (1988)).

Iphigenia in Tauris thus engages on many levels with other versions of the family story, but the significance of such parallels in terms of tone remains controversial. Indeed, critical disagreement exists over just how dark the play is: all may agree that the play's focus on human error and the power of chance (*tychê*), nature and the gods is typical of tragedy, but beyond that, assessments often diverge. In her influential interpretation of the play, Anne Burnett suggests it was written almost as a sequel to the *Eumenides* and likens it to satyr drama: "the release that is effected at the end of this tragedy is as genial and as general as anything wrought by a satryr play" (Burnett (1976) 72). In line with Burnett's approach, some see the play as

more lighthearted than other Euripidean tragedies, with appealing characters who deal with no unsurmountable problems: for example, Platnauer ((1938) v), citing Murray's description of the play as a "tragedy not of death, but of homesickness" ((1913) 146), maintains it is "not a tragedy at all" but a combination of romance and thriller; Caldwell (1974–75) stresses the folktale elements of heroic quest and longlost siblings in the play; Hall (2012) argues that Iphigenia has an unusual role as a "quest heroine" and also discusses how ancient audiences seem to have responded positively to the play's depiction of supportive sibling and cousin relationships. Knox (1970) suggests that *Iphigenia in Tauris*, *Helen*, and *Ion*, with their humorous recognition scenes, served as precursors to new comedy, although the issue of what is "comic" in tragedy remains almost as problematic as the definition of comedy itself (cf. Seidensticker (1982); Gregory (2000)). Other critics suggest that the problems of tone resist efforts to characterize the play—or at least aspects of it—as humorous or unambiguously positive (for example Wolff (1992); Kyriakou (2006) 7–9). Going even further in this direction, Wright has argued for a deeply tragic—and moreover, "horribly bleak" and "radically negative" ((2005) 387)—understanding of the play. Such different critical assessments likewise underscore the ambiguity characteristic of Euripides that the play exemplifies so well (cf., for example, Wolff (1992) 331 with note 41; Trieschnigg (2008), focusing especially on dreams).

Setting aside the question of tone, those who argue for the play's tragic status rightly point to one basic fact: the play was presented as a tragedy in antiquity. Moreover, a precise definition of Greek tragedy beyond certain formal elements is extremely hard to come by. As noted earlier, Aristotle in the *Poetics* had high praise for *Iphigenia in Tauris*—and indisputably categorized it as a tragedy. In fact, for Aristotle, it was not only a tragedy, but representative of the best kind of tragedy in at least one respect, the recognition (*anagnôrisis*) of kin combined with reversal (*peripeteia*):

> the best is the last: I mean, of the kind as in *Cresphontes* when Merope is about to kill her son but does not kill him, but recognizes him; and in *Iphigenia*, the sister recognizes the brother [and does not kill him] . . .
>
> (Aristotle *Poetics* 1454a4–7)

Indeed, Aristotle repeatedly turns to *Iphigenia in Tauris*, along with *Oedipus Tyrannus*, to exemplify excellence in plotting and the use of recognition (cf. also *Poetics* 11.1452b3–8, 16.1455a16–19, 17.1455b3–15); admittedly, he also finds the recognition of Orestes by Iphigenia too contrived (16.1455b30–36). Modern critics have often been rather alarmed by Aristotle's conjoining of *Iphigenia in Tauris*, with its happy ending, and *Oedipus Tyrannus*, with the terrible suffering and destruction it portrays. However, such a pairing is indicative of Aristotle's focus on plot, in contrast with modern interests in character and psychology (Belfiore (1992)). Furthermore, both plays demonstrate powerfully the interaction of *tychê* and the moral virtues of the admirable but not perfect protagonists, that is, their determination to do the right thing in the midst of circumstances for which they are not entirely responsible (White (1992)). Of course, Aristotle should not be taken as the last word in defining Greek tragedy—he is prescriptive, not merely descriptive—but he certainly provides evidence of *Iphigenia in*

Tauris's status as a popular *tragedy* in antiquity.

3 Rescue/Escape/Safety

Aristotle's analysis of *Iphigenia in Tauris* underscores another issue: the importance of the theme of salvation. In his discussion of plot composition, after going over the setup of Iphigenia's situation as priestess in Tauris, Aristotle writes:

> Later in time, it happened that the brother of the priestess came; the fact that he came because the god ordered him to go there and why are outside the action; but having come and having been captured, at just about the point of being sacrificed, he disclosed his identity, either as Euripides or Polyidus did it, saying, as was reasonable, that not only his sister but also himself had to be sacrificed; and from this comes salvation (*sôtêria*).
>
> (*Poetics* 17.1455b6–11)

The rest of the play, with its plotting, escape, and capture sequences, is not included in the summary; it is, for Aristotle, merely skillful elaboration. Instead, the issue of *sôtêria* is the point. Indeed, the play's preoccupation with issues of rescue, recognition, and escape is striking: *Iphigenia in Tauris* portrays multiple rescues in a plot that not only has Iphigenia rescue Orestes and Orestes rescue Iphigenia, but also Apollo rescue Artemis and Athena rescue all of them; furthermore, *Iphigenia in Tauris* uses *sôtêria* and related words more than any other Euripidean drama, although the term does not appear until the second episode (Burnett (1971) 47–8 with n. 1). Hall reminds us that Artemis was worshipped as *Sôteira*, pointing to cults at Megara, Troezen, Boiai in Lacedaimonia, and Heraclea in Lucania; she suggests that the goddess in this guise has a natural connection with the specific set of dangers involving the Greek characters in the play and stresses her close connection with Iphigenia, who engineers the plan that removes the Greeks safely from Tauris (2012, 27–28). Yet, although the concept is central to the play, it is not immediately clear why Euripides has chosen to emphasize the theme in this play more than in any other tragedy in which characters seek a way out of a terrible situation, nor is it necessarily obvious exactly what *sôtêria* entails. The play suggests that *sôtêria* is not permanent, that the methods of achieving it are usually fraught with moral challenges, and that the gods' role in providing it is both unknowable and unpredictable.

Interestingly, it is Orestes who brings up the topic first—but in negative terms, dismissing the desire for rescue ("I find him not wise who . . . laments that death is near when he is without hope of rescue (*sôtêria*)," 487). Iphigenia then takes up the theme emphatically in her speech outlining the initial rescue plan (578–596), but she too speaks of rescuing not herself but Orestes:

> Would you be willing, if I were to save (*sôsaimi*) you, to announce something for me, having gone to Argos, to my relatives there, and to carry back a letter, which some captive, pitying me, wrote . . . For I have not had anyone who having gone back to Argos might bring the news and having been saved (*sôtheis)* might send my letter to some one of my relatives. But you . . . be brought safely (*sôthêti*) there, having received no shameful fee, safety (*sôtêrian*) in return for light letters.
>
> (582–94)

In response, Orestes insists on rescue for Pylades, arguing that a man should not find safety for himself (*autos sesôtai,* 607) through the misfortune of friends, although Pylades suggests that it is cowardly for him to accept such a substitution; he may even be suspected of murdering Orestes if he returns home in safety (*sesôsthai,* 679). As the scene continues, safety terms concern Pylades (695, 751, 757), the letter (763), and then both together: as Iphigenia says, "having saved your body, you will save my words for me" (*to sôma sôsas tous logous sôseis emoi,* 765).

By contrast, Iphigenia uses the term in relation to her own situation only after the recognition takes place. Her letter does not refer to a desire for rescue or salvation; instead, she pleads with Orestes to "bring" (*komisai,* 774) her from Tauris and "transfer" (*metastêson,* 775) her from the sacrificial slaughters of the goddess. To be sure, the letter threatens curses upon him if he fails to act on her behalf, but she does not literally seek *sôtêria*. Indeed, she was rescued long ago from real danger ("Tell him that by giving a deer in place of me, Artemis saved (*esôse*) me, [a deer] which my father sacrificed while seeming to strike a sharp knife against me," 783–85); now, she just wants to go home. But once Orestes' identity is revealed and both the necessity and difficulty of saving him becomes clear, her own salvation becomes part of the equation. Thus, before they have figured out how to escape, she says she is willing to save him at the cost of her own life (1002–5); but after her role in the escape has been defined, she speaks at last, but still rather obliquely, of her own rescue when she enlists the cooperation of the Chorus, arguing that, as women, she and they are "most determined to save (*sôzein*) our common interests" (1056–57). Almost immediately thereafter, she frames her safety—and the possibility of her death—as inextricable from that of Orestes and Pylades: "See how one fortune—either a return to our paternal land or death—holds three dearest friends" (1065–66). Finally, she states that, if she is saved (*sôtheisa*), she will bring the Chorus safe (*sôsô*) to Greece (1067–68); here, for the first time, she applies the verb in the passive voice to herself, before assuring the Chorus, now back in the active voice, that she will rescue them. As at Aulis, the fortune of others once again depends on the figure of Iphigenia: Artemis saved her then, but now she must save others by saving herself.

For Orestes, *sôtêria* likewise involves escaping death, but for him, the concept also involves escape from the madness that following Apollo's commands has brought him. Moreover, Orestes' experiences call into question the finality of divine rescue. After all, Apollo saved (*esôse*) him by testifying at his trial in Athens (965), with Athena assisting in the victory, but such rescue turned out not to be lasting. Some of the Furies have continued pursuing him, despite his urgent appeals to Apollo for help (975); at one point, he even suggests Apollo has

tricked him into leaving Greece because the god is ashamed of ordering Orestes to kill Clytemnestra (711–15). Indeed, for both Orestes and Iphigenia, the demands of the gods lie at the heart of their suffering; as the play continues, it becomes increasingly clear that the gods must participate in their salvation as well.

Certainly, Orestes appears just as incapable of saving himself or his family name on his own as he seems to be in other Euripidean versions of his story: even if he is a more appealing character than his counterparts in Euripides' *Electra* and *Orestes*, like them, he must rely on his sister and his cousin to construct plots and keep his spirits up. Thus, he is ready to flee in despair almost as soon as he arrives at the temple (102–3); it is Pylades who immediately rejects this idea, insisting that they stay and figure out a way to get what they came for (104–115). Later, he nobly insists that he be sacrificed instead of Pylades; when Pylades argues against this suggestion, Orestes says that Pylades is really the better choice to save his (Orestes') ancestral house and name, given Orestes' repeated ill fortune (691–98). Once the recognition has taken place, Orestes asks Iphigenia to assist Apollo in achieving what he now believes is the god's new rescue effort: "Help bring about the safety (*sôtêria*) which he [Apollo] determined: if we can get hold of the goddess' image, I will be released from my madness and, having brought you in my manyoared boat, I will place you down in Mycenae again. But, o beloved one, o dearest sister, save (*sôson*) your ancestral home, and save (*eksôson*) me" (979–985). Finally, when he tries to help Iphigenia figure out an escape plan, both his suggestions are dismissed as either improper (killing the king, 1020–23) or impractical (sneaking the statue and themselves away under cover of darkness, 1024–27). He immediately despairs: "Alas, we are destroyed! How shall we be saved (*sôtheimen*)?" (1028). Orestes frequently espouses noble behavior, but he is not very resourceful. Although Iphigenia says that male children are the pillars of the house (57; cf. 1005–6), Euripidean drama repeatedly suggests that the house of Agamemnon would not long endure if not for the fierce determination of his daughters and the assistance of Pylades (who, it should be noted, has abandoned his position as pillar of his own household in order to prop up that of Orestes).

Fortunately, Iphigenia, like Electra in *Electra* and Pylades in *Orestes*, is able to come up with a plan. Eschewing violence, she proposes trickery, while making no mention of an additional method, simple persuasion. Whereas Iphigenia earlier believed she could persuade Thoas to let one of the Greeks go (742, marked by an extrametrical monosyllable), apparently without the need for deception, now she suggests she will persuade him (1049)—with lies. Two further issues are worth noting here: first, the triad of violence, deception, and persuasion appears in other plays, with persuasion, or at least truthful persuasion, often dismissed as unworkable. Thus, in the beginning of Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, Neoptolemus suggests both persuasion and violence as methods with which to overcome Philoctetes' anticipated refusal to help the Greeks, but Odysseus dismisses both of these, arguing that only deception will work (90–107). Neoptolemus later regrets his lies and tells (most of) the truth, and, although the play advances no simple vision of what is best, morally or practically, the fact that persuasion was not even attempted seems to be presented as problematic. Second, when Athena appears and tells Thoas that Orestes has taken the cult statue of Artemis in accordance with the commands of Apollo, Thoas accepts this situation without protest or bewilderment (1475–85). Is it possible that the

Greek characters might have successfully persuaded Thoas themselves by telling him of Apollo's orders? To be sure, persuasion is often unsuccessful in Attic tragedy: when characters plead for their lives or other essential needs, they rarely obtain their objectives without also applying either force or deception. Thus, the Aeschylus' *Eumenides* speaks of "guileful persuasion" (*peithô dolia*, 726): persuasion is not a simple issue, although it is central to a democratic society. But Orestes, Iphigenia and Pylades do not even consider the possibility of persuading Thoas by telling him the truth. Euripides may have been more interested in showing the Greeks "baiting the foreigner" (Hall (1989) 122), but, as noted earlier, the gullibility of the barbarian king does not necessarily render the actions of the Greek characters so very free from barbarian—or morally suspect—taint. Indeed, the messenger's report of the problem they encounter in trying to flee (a wave prevents the ship from leaving) indicates some kind of divine displeasure with their behavior, although the exact source of that displeasure remains unclear. Thus, Iphigenia believes that Artemis is angry at the theft of the statue (1400), whereas the messenger believes the cause is Poseidon who is angry at the family for their role in the Trojan War, and indirectly Artemis who is angry at Iphigenia for betraying her (1414–19). Athena merely states that Orestes is acting in accordance with Apollo's commands and that Poseidon is calming the waves at her request (1444–45). We do not hear from Artemis herself.

At the end of the play, Athena unexpectedly appears, instead of Apollo or Artemis, and, in a final reference to salvation, wishes the escapees well: "go in good fortune, being happy in your lot of being saved (*sôzomenês*)" (1491–92). If we use Orestes' definition of salvation, escape from imminent death and Furydriven madness, then his salvation is achieved; his name, too, will live on through association with the rites at Halae. However, the precise nature of Iphigenia's salvation is less clear (Kyriakou (2006) 460). After all, she obtains almost none of what she sought earlier in the play—marriage, children, city, her family (220), and conveyance back to Argos (774)—and to be sure, she did not deem this as salvation per se. But she also asks for release from carrying out human sacrifices (775–6) and later prays to Artemis to save her by bringing her away from a barbarian land to Greece (1084–87 and 1398–1400), and this she does obtain, although Artemis' exact role in her salvation is left unstated. The goddess' image is preserved and brought to Athens, to Halae, where a metaphorical human sacrifice will take place as a substitution for the loss of the rites at Tauris (Wolff (1992) 314–18). Iphigenia herself will not go back to her family in Argos, but will become priestess of Artemis at Brauron, where she will no longer perform what the Greeks deem to be a perverted form of sacrifice to Artemis. The salvation at the end of the play thus concerns the salvation of Apollo's words and Artemis' cult; the salvation of the humans is a byproduct of these needs and does not necessarily match their own desires.

The one group of humans that is promised rescue with no divine strings attached is the Chorus. (Cropp (2000) 60, arguing that there is a lacuna at 1467, suggests that the Chorus was also told to go to Brauron to serve Artemis.) The Chorus promise to help Iphigenia, seemingly even if she cannot help them: thus, when she begs them to keep quiet about Orestes' identity and the escape plan, they respond, "be bold, dear mistress, and just save yourself" (*sôizou monon*, 1075), and thereafter, in a beautiful ode of longing for home and family, they sing that Iphigenia

is going home under the auspices of Apollo whereas they are left behind (1123–36); they express no expectation that they will actually be rescued. Later, Athena orders that the Chorus be released (1467–68). To be sure, if we see Iphigenia as inextricably tied to Artemis—her human representative, as it were—then their rescue, too, is contingent on service to the gods, but their rescue is perhaps the most unforeseen in the play. With Iphigenia, Orestes, and Pylades, the audience expects that salvation will come (even if it fears that it will not): the only question is how. With the Chorus, by contrast, it is likely that audience expectations are more in the line with those of the Chorus members themselves: their fate is unknown and, perhaps even more essential, unimportant. The Chorus draw attention to this fact earlier in the play, when, during Iphigenia's interrogation of the unrecognized Orestes, they ask the plaintive question, "Alas, alas: and what about us and our parents? do they live? or do they not? Who could tell us?" (576–77). No one answers—no one even tries to answer.

Madness, loss of homeland, and slavery are also forms of death: the crazed individual experiences a kind of death in the loss of his identity and selfawareness, whereas permanent loss of home and slavery can be considered "social deaths." By fulfilling his mission, Orestes is freed from madness; by returning home, the Chorus and Iphigenia are restored to life. So surely the play shows us salvation from death both literally and figuratively: to that extent, we have a "happy" ending. But the particularly fortuitous nature of the Chorus' rescue, the need for Orestes and Iphigenia to be rescued by the gods twice, the fate of Iphigenia on her return to Greece and the seemingly arbitrary presence of Athena in the final moments of the play demonstrate, I think, that salvation is neither easy to define nor dependably permanent, and the sources of salvation are hard to determine.

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FURTHER READING

The commentaries by Cropp (2000) and Kyriakou (2006) provide full discussion and bibliographies. Burnett (1971) and Wright (2005) provide different perspectives on the play within the context of examining additional Euripidean dramas; Hall (2012) analyzes not only the play itself, but also its reception in classical antiquity and beyond.

CHAPTER 16
Ion: An Edible Fairy Tale?

Emma M. Griffiths

In the *Ion* Euripides takes the building blocks of fairy tale (abandoned hero, reunited with parents then restored to a rightful place of power and privilege), and combines them with peculiarly Athenian ideas about divine influence and ethnic identity. The key figures may seem interchangeable with characters in other myths: Ion the abandoned child lacking a place in the world, Creousa, his mother who was raped by Apollo, and Xuthus, Creousa's husband, who knows nothing of the child and is troubled by his own infertility. The motif of the abandoned hero is not specifically articulated in the AarneThompson index of folklore motifs, but the similarity of stories across many cultures gives Ion a global currency (Huys (1995) 28, 377–394), and the plot involves deception, attempted murder, and radical reconfiguration of the family unit.

The play was not one selected for deliberate archiving in Lycurgus' time, but survived as part of the "alphabetic set" (Battazettato (2003); see Mastronarde in this volume). It has found many admirers in modern western civilization, particularly as it speaks to issues of authority and psychological struggle. Talfourd's 1836 play *Ion* was based on Euripides' version, using it as a springboard for ideas of political reform (Hall (1997)), whereas productions in the early twentyfirst century have focused more on the psychological family drama. In 2009 the Shakespeare Theater Company's production was reviewed by the *Washington Post* as a "breezy satire" with themes of mixed parentage and questions of divine trustworthiness (Marks (2009)); the production of Boxcar Theater in San Francisco prompted at least one shorthand comparison to the Jerry Springer show (Taylor (2009)). The play influenced many iconic figures of modern literature: Oscar Wilde appreciated the dynamics of Euripides' story (Guy, Jackson, and Small (2007) 407), and many have noted the influence behind *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Goldberg (1980) 59); William Golding was a classical scholar (Dick (1965)), and his last unpublished work, provisionally titled *The Double Tongue,* may be read as a sustained literary engagement with *Ion* (Pauw (2008)).

In 2001 Storey described the play as "a critical battlefield" ((2001) 427), and the following decade of scholarship has not witnessed any significant détente. Some have seen the primary division in scholarship as one between the supporters or detractors of an "Ironic" approach, viewing tragedy as a fundamentally subversive genre which questioned norms of contemporary Athenian society (Swift (2008) 99). Such a simple dualism, however, does an injustice to the highly nuanced analyses of the play produced in recent years. This brief article will not aim to advance a new overall interpretation of the play, but will instead survey some of the major issues, then focus in detail on one aspect of the drama, the role of food, and emotional satisfaction.

1 Autochthony and Identity

Hermes' prologue introduces a very unusual figure, someone without a place in society, without even a name. The boy who will come to be known as "Ion" has no social identity, because he was found abandoned at the temple of Apollo. His survival and upbringing relied on extrasocial relationships; abandoned by his mother and conveyed by divine power to Delphi, he was then saved by the choice of the Pythian priestess to care for the child within the temple complex. As a child he received physical sustenance, but without a social identity he will never be able to become an adult citizen of any state. However, the members of the audience know from their own local history that the child has an illustrious social identity waiting to be claimed, although Euripides has already sprung a surprise on them, presenting Apollo rather than Xuthus as Ion's true father. Ion, therefore, has divine parentage, but is also is a crucial figure for the continuation of the autochthonous Athenian royal family. The rich divine heritage which awaits Ion is graphically represented in the opening parodos where the Chorus describe scenes on the temple, representing the victory of Olympian gods over the "earthborn" (Rosivach (1977)). As the only surviving child of Erechtheus, Creousa is a descendant of an "earthborn," and thus the only link back to the mythical foundation of Athens (in the play's condensed genealogy of Erichthonios–Erechtheus–Creousa, omitting Erechtheus' father Pandarus). When the play opens the line of direct succession has been threatened because Creusa's marriage to Xuthus has not produced a child. When Xuthus comes to Delphi to enquire about his childlessness, he is delighted to be told that Ion is his son from a youthful indiscretion, and with this fiction he gives Ion a social identity as his son and heir. However, the audience knows that that Ion is truly the heir to Athenian power because of his biological link to Erichthonios via Creousa.

For the contemporary audience watching Euripides' play in the late fifth century the idea of autochthony was a significant element of their national selfidentity, albeit one which was malleable and at times contradictory (Pelling (2009)). Several influential analyses of the play have highlighted how the idea of autochthony is articulated and examined in the play. Zeitlin emphasizes the male use of the feminine to negotiate ideas of gender and identity (1989), while Loraux's analysis figures Creousa as an *epikleros* (heiress), and highlights the intersection of autochthony and Athenian imperialism ((1993) chapter 5). Zacharia advances the thesis that the play demonstrates an evolution of Athenian ideology; from a "dogmatic vision of autochthony" the play moves to espouse a world view in which "Ionian" is as important as "Athenian,", and ultimately concludes with a broad "humanistic" and "liberal vision" of Athenian identity (Zacharia (2003) 100). In this analysis "Kreousa's mistaken obsession with autochthony has made her less than fully human" (Zacharia (2003) 101–2).

To understand autochthony is not a matter of mere antiquarian interest, for the idea contributed to contemporary sociopolitical debates. The ideological manipulation of nationalistic terminology was part of a wider linguistic framework for Athenian democracy and imperial ambition in the fifth century. Speech in *Ion* is problematic as characters frequently speak at crosspurposes, and language often causes confusion rather than facilitating communication. Foucault (2001) emphasized the motif of *parrhesia* which aligns Creousa and Ion with an

outspoken truth, drawing strength from their Athenian connection with the earth, while Apollo and Xuthus are associated with silence and deception. ChongGossard's thesis that Euripides attempts to write his characters "as women" emphasizes the gendered constructions of silence and deception in the play ((2008) 4); Ion's personal quest to negotiate his identity means he must succeed in several forms of communication before he can take his place in the world of language (sometimes constructed in terms of the Lacanian "Symbolic"). To this set of linguistic puzzles, we can add the problem of prophecy and the fact that Apollo apparently did not foresee Creousa's attempt to murder Ion. In the final analysis, it requires the intervention of Athens' patron goddess, Athena, to provide a resolution.

The question of autochthony and the moral status of action is one area where the ancient and modern views may diverge sharply due to conflicting political perspectives. After a generation of postcolonial scholarship, modern views of autochthony have inevitably been colored by experiences of nationalist extremism and "ethnic cleansing" (Geschiere (2009)). Detienne's formulation of the idea highlights "[. . .] a type of autochthony that very soon turns into a 'Murderous Identity', a 'truth' that kills [. . .]" (Detienne (2008) 94). This configuration of ideas relates not only to Creousa but also to Ion himself, who displays a sophisticated understanding of culturallydetermined violence (Hoffer (1996)). Reading *Ion* through this lens, an insistence on autochthony can appear dangerous not only to outsiders, but also to those who claim the tradition as their own birthright. (Lape (2010) 119–126). Does the happy ending negate the previous suffering and downplay the problems of identity which are still concealed from Xuthus? At the end of the play everyone is reconciled and Ion assumes his adult role as the social and biological heir to Athenian royal power, so for an Athenian audience this may have been satisfactory. A genealogy was preserved and Athena's divine protection was reaffirmed as she articulated the history of the four preCleisthenic tribes. For a fifthcentury Athenian audience, if the family and state are functioning well, then the position of individuals may be a secondary concern. (This can be contrasted with the ongoing individual unease created in Talaud's 1839 play, where Ion establishes a new political order only to then commit suicide). A communityfocused approach may bring us closest to the views of the original fifthcentury audience, but Euripides' concern to create complex characters also requires us to engage with individual responses to community issues, which in turn leads to consideration of psychological processes in the play.

2 Psychological Readings: The Role of the Son

A crude application of psychoanalytic theory would reduce *Ion* to a set of universal story elements which existed in the original story and for the original audience, *whether or not Euripides or the Athenians were conscious of the fact*. This is the doublethink of psychoanalysis, that attempts to question or refute a particular analysis can be taken as evidence of psychological denial and, therefore, discounted. Fortunately, most analyses of tragedy are more cautious than this, highlighting areas where psychological readings may offer insight into certain features of the plot or character behavior. Recent discussions of *Ion* have demonstrated how responsive the story is to psychological approaches, and how different

Freud's theories on the "family romance" might have been had he worked with *Ion* rather than the myth of Oedipus (Bowlby (2009); Pedrick (2007); Weiss (2008)).

If we begin with Ion himself, there is a long list of psychological issues which could be seen to influence his behavior and attitudes—abandoned by his mother, he is raised by a priestess in the context of a temple, deprived of the nurture of breastfeeding, not knowing his father, he then meets one father only to be told he is actually the child of a god who assaulted his clearly distressed mother. Ion undergoes a significant change in social status as the play progresses, starting as a temple attendant and leaving Delphi as heir to the throne of Athens. The attendant emotional journey takes him from a lost, innocent figure to one who appears to have made peace with some complicated emotional, biological, and theological problems, but his psychological development is not necessarily as dramatic as some critics envisage. At the start of the play Ion is not a child as some have claimed (ChongGossard (2008) 109); he is ready to become an adult but he lacks a social framework. He has the physical requirements for adulthood and in his conversations he shows himself able to hold an adult conversation. Some have seen his encounter with Xuthus (517 ff.) as a sign that Ion is adolescent, if the older man's behavior is construed as a sexual overture (Knox (1986) 260). This approach is controversial, and the refutation of the claim by Lee ((1997), 216 n. ad 517.) is persuasive, but a homosexual motif is echoed in Golding's revisioning of the story (Pauw (2008)). If Ion is depicted in the limbo of adolescence where difference aspects of adult identity are confirmed at different chronological points, then the play can also be linked with interpretations of tragedy relating to Athenian initiation rites such as the ephebeia (Segal (1999)).

A psychological analysis of Ion's actions can emphasize the problems of forming an adult identity when parental background is missing, a social and a psychological conundrum. The play allows for a wideranging contemplation of issues of parentage, the varying importance of nature over nurture, and the problems of conflicting parental claims. Ion owes his initial upbringing firstly to his "biological" parent Apollo and then to Apollo's intervention mediated through the Pythian priestess who chooses to care for the child. At the end of the play, Ion has been given an explicit adult identity though a mortal "father" (Xuthus) appointed by Apollo, and an implicit identity as heir to the house of Erechtheus through his reunion with his biological mother, Creousa. Although these are potentially explosive inheritances, it is difficult to trace Ion's psychological development in the play, mainly because he is essentially reactive rather than proactive. Ion himself appears to make peace with the problems very quickly. One way to approach this problem would be to move away from describing Ion as possessing a character of innocence, and rather think of him more as a potential character, a character in waiting. When we meet him he has been raised literally to embody the values of the Delphic Oracle, fed on offerings made to the temple. Hermes' description makes it clear that Ion himself is an ornament to the temple, just as the bay branches he carries (78–80), and the very name "Ion" adds to, rather than closes down, discussion of identity. Names often held strong significance in Greek culture and described something about the context in which the child was born (such as echoing a grandparent's name) or the parents' hopes for the future (names involving forms of "blessed,", "lucky" "wise" and so forth). In this case, however, the name is peculiarly colorless. The word is derived from the verb "to go," and the form "Ion" is a

participle meaning “going,” implying movement and process rather than a fixed identity. Xuthus’ explanation for his choice of a participle “you were the one I met coming forward” (661) is plausible for him, and the name creates an important etymological link to the Ionians, a significant element in Athenian narratives of selfdefinition (Dougherty (1996)), but for the character of Ion at the start of the play the formulation is awkward. Zacharia ((2003) 126–28) has made a strong case for reading this as a form of overdetermination, where Apollo is ultimately the one who confers the name, which is reported by Hermes and bestowed by Xuthus. The ambiguity of the name may also be read as a reflection of the ambiguity manifested by Apollo’s oracle (Kindt (2006)) or of the psychological ambiguities inherent in democratic systems (Stavrakakis (1997)). Ancient audiences would not have employed such psychological terminology, but names mattered, as Plato’s *Cratylus* so vividly demonstrates. The peculiarity of the name draws attention to the problems of identity in the play, as Ion’s assumption of his place in adult society can be described both as a social transformation in terms of Athenian ritual practice, and also as a psychological journey to successfully negotiate issues with his mother and become an adult, entering into Lacan’s “Symbolic” (Sorkin Rabinowitz (1993) 210) and claiming use of language to control his own destiny.

3 Psychological Readings: the Role of the Mother

While Ion is a difficult poster boy for psychological analysis, Creousa is far more accessible, not least because we see her interacting with different audiences, principally Ion himself and the Chorus of women. Reading from the drama’s back story, Ion’s conception, we see Creousa’s psychological development begin with a trauma; she explicitly says that she struggled against the assault (939) and that she was unwilling (941). Her later behavior has been read as a response to this trauma, as she “relives more than retells” her story in a classic Freudian pattern of repetition (Weiss (2008) 49). As Greek tragedy displays a generic preference for repetition, this is not in itself a new observation. However, psychological readings can continue to explore how Creousa’s actions in the play reflects her emotional status, as a rape victim and a mother who abandoned her child. The attempt to kill Ion can be read as displacement behavior in response to what she views as the final denial of her experience. Although such psychological readings are persuasive, a number of cultural issues need to be acknowledged in this picture. The status of Creousa’s initial experience is potentially very different from twentieth and twentyfirst century understandings of “rape.” It can be argued that “rape” was a category of action which only a woman’s *kurios* could define (Sommerstein (2006))—Creousa suffers in silence, so there is no external authority to acknowledge her experience. Also this was not a *mortal* outrage, but rather a divine visitation, and Creousa’s anger is initially presented more in response to Apollo’s neglect after the fact (342–345), rather than as a response to a traumatic sexual violation (Omitowoju (2002) 186). Her attempt to kill Ion when he appears to be Xuthus’ son need not be read in purely psychological terms, for there is a strong culturally specific pattern for her motivation, namely the proverbial hostility of stepmothers towards their stepchildren (Watson (1997)). Creousa herself refers to this cultural paradigm (1025), and Ion expresses similar anxieties about his future reception in Athens (607–15). Creousa believes she is attempting to murder the son of

Xuthus, for Ion's acceptance into the family implies that her own childlessness is permanent, and she uses vivid imagery of inhabiting a home without children, a house of grief (790–91). Her act is also construed as patriotic, a defense of Athenian identity as Xuthus has "married into" Athens and is now introducing his "son" to usurp true Erechtheid authority (this is the view expressed both by the Old Man (836–56) and by the Chorus of women, (1048–1074)). Critics may argue that regardless of the cultural formulations surrounding the rape, the emotional impact of a violation remains the same, and Golden's (2004) discussion of the ritual acknowledgement of maternal grief may suggest an ancient awareness of such issues.

While the rape may be the most immediately troubling issue for a modern audience, the more difficult concept in the original context may well be the related phenomena of infant abandonment and problems of infertility. We should not confuse Creousa's abandonment of her child with her attempted murder of Ion, the adult, for Euripides' audience knew of infant exposure as a practice codified in a complex set of unspoken rules. The newborn infant was only a potential human being, for it was the male members of the family who turned small mammals into human beings with an acknowledged place in society. Without any formal marriage to situate her pregnancy in a social setting, Creousa had no family to acknowledge the child as a human being. Throughout the GraecoRoman world this initial relationship, the choice to nurture, was not a natural, inevitable act, but was part of a process of socialization and acculturation which would continue into adulthood. A number of rituals are attested for the acceptance of a child into a family to provide a basic level of nurture. The ritual of the "amphidromia" involved introducing the child to the household gods by "running round" the hearth (Paradiso (1988)). We lack precise historical documentation of this practice, and references may reflect a conceptual discourse more than a historical reality, but there clearly were rituals to formalize a transition across a social limbo; these would not have been necessary if there was a strong cultural presumption that all children would be nurtured by their biological parents (Ingalls (2002)). In order to appreciate the significance of these rituals of acceptance we need only look at the consequences of nonacceptance. The brutal extreme, reflected in myth, is that without acceptance into a family the child is a piece of meat, food for wild animals and birds of prey. This is the fate Creousa believes has befallen her child when she abandoned him (348), the fate intended for many heroes such as Alexandros and Oedipus (the motif is explored in detail by Huys (2002)). The idea of the child as flesh is also reflected in other myths, such as the history of Cronus, who eats his children to prevent them assuming their destined identity as a threat to his rule (Apollodorus *Library* 1.2.1; cf. HalmTisserant (1993)). The act of exposure, rather than direct killing, indicates some degree of awareness, whether articulated or not, that this was a potential human being. For an ancient audience, the greater outrage in *Ion* may not have been the sexual violation, but the manner in which Apollo removed Creousa from her place in society, concealing the pregnancy and birth. His involvement is an extreme form of the sociallyprescribed role of fathers, for the force of social structure to override biology is a hallmark of the GraecoRoman family, where female generative power is usurped by male authority. While the point of acceptance is a vital intersection between biology, philosophy, and sociology for the individual child, it also is a significant moment for the wider society, as the point where male control over biology is asserted, establishing the principle of patriarchal control. The divine status of the father in *Ion*

adds a twist to the social framework of fifthcentury Athens, where exposure left the "child" to "fate." In reality, it is likely that there was a reasonable expectation that the child would be found and taken up by someone else. By leaving the baby with some immediate protection and wealth, Creousa gave the child a chance of adoption (although at 1544 she speaks of her attempt to "kill" the child.). Infertility and high infant mortality were problems across the ancient world (Xuthus' consultation of the Delphic oracle is mirrored in historical evidence for similar questions posed at many divine sites), so there might well have been cases where an abandoned child was found and taken to replace a lost baby. Creousa's most powerful distress occurs when she returns to the spot where she left the child and believes he has been eaten by wild animals. The compulsion to repeat begins at this point when she, or rather her "friend" goes back and for over the same ground (352). Her account implies that she was conflicted in her actions, for there was no evidence of predators yet she is convinced by that analysis of the situation. We may be able to read different psychological factors in her behavior, that she perhaps returned to the exposure site intending to bury the child, or that the loss of the child to animals is actually a less disturbing outcome than the thought that Apollo took the child away in secret. It is, perhaps, Euripides' very presentation of her confusion that makes her such a compelling character.

4 Men and Gods

The play opens and closes with a divine onstage presence, yet many have seen the story as "essentially anthropocentric" (Zacharia (2003) 146). Concentrating on the role of mortal actions, some have argued that the events of the play can unfold without any divine manifestation (Cole (1997) 94), and that involving the gods makes us question whether the divine fairy tale is believable in its own framework. We could instead accept multiple layers of interpretation, as suggested in Euripides' *Heracles*, where examples of divine misbehavior are dismissed by Heracles himself as impossible stories (vv. 1340–46; see further Marshall in this volume). Euripides seems to have created a new mythological variant by making Apollo Ion's father, and he was willing to push the audience to question the reliability of his story (Cole (2008)); he addresses the biological impossibility of autochthony when Ion and Xuthus dismiss the idea of anyone being actually born from the earth (542). Reading against the grain would produce a scenario where Xuthus is not only the social father, but the biological one as well. Although Xuthus is often viewed as a comic cuckold and a comic butt of the play, we should note that Xuthus is sold a plausible story *by a god*, and the story he tells about youthful sexual indiscretions elevates his status because his behavior mirrored that of Apollo himself. There is, then, the possibility that Xuthus is actually the man who raped Creousa. Ferguson ((1969) 115) suggests that if Xuthus' name actually referred to him having red hair, this feature might have combined with bright sunlight during the assault, causing Creousa to view her attacker as a manifestation of the sun god. If Ferguson is correct that *Ion* was staged in the same year as *Heracles* then doubts over divine parentage would be even stronger, as both plays explore dual parentage. Such readings, however, remain highly speculative, as the onstage presence of divine figures requires explicit comment. Many have seen divine roles as crucial to the play, as Swift ((2008) 187) "the gods act to protect the human characters from

their fallible mortal instincts." Scholars have read the play as an attack on Apollo or, conversely, as a demonstration of divine benevolence, but many have also noted that the play seems to balance carefully between the two extremes. As scholars we should perhaps respect the advice given to mortal characters throughout tragedy, and not expect gods to behave in ways that conform to the beliefs and ideologies of mortals.

Time and again tragic characters are warned that gods cannot be held to the same standards as mortals, although men may wish this were so (Ion expresses this desire forcefully (439–440) and we see it elsewhere in tragedy such as in the Old Man's plea for Aphrodite's clemency in *Hippolytus* (v. 120) or Cadmus' outrage at Dionysus' vengeance in the *Bacchae* (v. 1349)). The *Ion* takes this trope one stage further, as Ion speculates about how gods would fare if judged by mortal standards, suggesting that if divine sexual indiscretions were subjected to mortal strictures gods would be forced to pay compensation equal to all the wealth in their temples (440 ff). Apollo is, however, free from such social forms as Ion tells Creousa there is no way to catch him out (369–72); he would never be implicated by his own oracular pronouncements.

If we consider whether gods can be judged by gods, we must conclude that Apollo's behavior is accepted by Hermes and explicitly praised by Athena (1695 "Apollo's handling of this matter has been satisfactory"). For a mortal audience, Apollo's actions are troubling, but he is frequently presented in Greek religion as a figure of contradictions, truth and deception, and the setting of the story increases the significance of this duality. The spatial dynamics of the drama, setting Delphi in Athens, foregrounds patterns of inclusion and distance. Several analyses have shown how Euripides weaves a complex web of spatial images into his story, from the detailed description of the temple scenes, to the ekphrasis describing the decorated tents which are organized for Ion's feast (Rosivach (1977); Shapiro (1995); Zeitlin (1989)). The core spatial axis around Delphi and Athens can anchor many other dualisms, the mythic ideal/human world, the divine/civic, past/present or gendered spaces of inside/outside (Kuntz (1993); Lee (1996); Loraux (1993); Zeitlin (1989)). These are all highly wrought worlds, the elaborate human artistry of the Delphic temple area inside the formal setting of the Theater of Dionysus. One of the most interesting spatial dynamics is that between the seen and the unseen. The civilized spaces presented physically are opposed to the wild, deserted countryside where Ion was conceived and abandoned (Rehm (2002) 114). By failing to appear on stage Apollo remains associated with that open space, a place of potential and the unseen. His absence may invite comparison with comic absences (see Given (2009) on Aristophanes) which highlights the lighter elements of the play, but he is also closely associated with the unseen forces of the world, such "Fate" and "Luck" (Giannopolou (2000)).

Through his absence Apollo remains the most elusive and perhaps also the most divine of all the gods in the play; this absence is counterpointed by the strong onstage presence of Athena and the practical, personal relationship she shares with mortals. Athena is a model parent. In Hermes' prologue and the Chorus' song (265 ff.) she is praised for providing for Erichthonios, even though he was not her own child. The tangible and ongoing benefits of this care are explicitly mentioned when Creousa recognizes the golden snakes Athena gave to the children of the family (1426–1429). It is these tokens that facilitate the recognition between mother and

son, rather than any divine intervention from Apollo, and the green fertility of Athena's olive branch now takes precedence over the earlier imagery connecting Ion to Apollo's bay tree. When Athena appears on stage, she is described as looking directly into the sun (1550), an image which gives the direction (east facing) but also indicates that she is able directly to face Apollo as sun god in a way that no mortal can. Athena deals with Apollo facetoface, enhancing her status as an honest arbiter who acts with discretion and speed, coming swiftly to the aid of the family (1556). It is fitting that while the Chorus close with a farewell to Apollo, it is Athena who receives the applause and the praise from Ion as a "worthy protector" and from Creousa as "one who loves Athens" (1617). (There are problems with the attribution of lines to speakers at the end of the play, but Lee's division seems appropriate (Lee 1997, 319 n. ad 1616–18).) As a community Athens is cared for, so we should perhaps be less concerned with the individual relationships between mortals and gods, mindful of the words of "Pericles" about the need for the state to be strong more than the individual (Thucydides 2. 3446). From this perspective, the play has ended happily for Athens, and the broad sweep of history has cancelled out or at least mitigated individual suffering, such that Creousa states she has put aside her previous enmity towards Apollo (1609–1612).

When we consider the roles of gods in the play, it is Creousa who sets up the most intriguing distinction between Athena and Apollo. Although she has accepted the new situation, she does not recant her earlier refusal to acknowledge a bond of family love, of *philia*, (friendship/family connection/obligation, and so on) with Apollo. She explicitly said that a future bond of *philia* could only be partial, regardless of how Apollo might make amends, 427 μὲν οὐ γένοιτ᾽ ἂν εἰς ἡμᾶς φίλος, (taking the force of ἅπας with φίλος). Creousa's closing words about Athena, 1617 καὶφιλοῦσα γε πτόλιν, echo this earlier formulation, but with the addition of the emphatic particle γε, suggesting that despite Athena's lack of biological connection she is actually part of the Athenian family, whereas Apollo is not, regardless of his biological connection. In a society where men are usually in control of the creation of family ties, this is a striking assertion of the female right to determine what constitutes a proper family relationship.

5 Food for the Soul

The first attempted "happy ending" to the story comes in the feast Xuthus stages for Ion, where Xuthus's happiness about his new family is spread to the whole community, and we are told everyone came and "filled up their *psyche* with rich food'" (1169–70) [. . .]. This expression could be read simply as an exaggerated expression of "the food was good, everyone had a good time," but the prominence of food in the whole drama suggests that there may be more to this idea, and that the physical may also have a psychological dimension. As modern productions of the play have shown, ancient and modern ideas can engage in fruitful dialogue, so I close this discussion with the suggestion that the play addresses the phenomenon known today as "comfort eating." (Lest this seem too farfetched, we should note that Wilde's use of food in *The Importance of Being Earnest* is extremely thoughtful, and Algernon explicitly says in the discussion of muffins at the end of Act 2 "When I am in trouble, food is the only thing

that consoles me.")

The psychological anguish in *Ion* means that everyone is casting around for some remedy for their emotional distress. Creousa hopes to find some emotional release in her song (Chong Gossard (2008) 147 notes the comparison with medical terminology), but as the nurse in Medea lamented there is no real solace in music (vv. 190–198). In the search for emotional fulfillment a socially acceptable answer (then as now) is that family gives you happiness. The majority of terms for happiness in this play are related to the possession of children, family connections rather than material wealth, the view expressed in the choral antistrophe, 472 ff. (McDonald (1978) 195). Happiness in Greek could be expressed with a number of terms (de Heer (1969)), but frequently focused on the successful operation of family life, rather than individual psychology. Unfortunately, "family" is shown to be unreliable, for Creousa says she comes from a good family but her happiness only goes so far because one element is missing (264). Although feasts are proverbially cheering, in this play the expression that food "fills up the *psyche*" credits it with a remarkable psychological power. A closer examination of the role of food in this play suggests that the serious and the comic may be more closely blended (deliberate culinary metaphor) than at first sight appears.

At the start of the play Ion is scaring away birds who are trying to eat the offerings. This action raises a complex nexus of ideas about violence and maternity, as the mother bird with her young relates to Creousa's own experience (Giraud (1987)). Ion himself is fighting the birds for food, as they are after the offerings made at the temple, the source of his own nourishment, and the scene introduces Ion as a perpetrator of violence. We should, however, also note that in on a mythical level the birds may be seen as dangerous. When Creousa reveals how she could not find the baby, she assumes the child was eaten by wild animals or birds. As Ion lacks a social identity, the shadow still looms over him that he is a physical body without a social identity, the negative image of ghosts in tragedy whose social identity outlasts their physical existence. This ambiguity can place him on either side of the prey/predator relationship with the birds, and is only overcome when a bird is poisoned by the wine, exposing the murder plot.

Ion's problematic status is resolved when Xuthus holds a feast which functions as a rebirth for Ion, echoing the traditional rituals of the amphidromia welcoming a newborn child into the family. Although this is a powerful ritual moment, it is described in a messenger speech which adds an element of distance, and I would suggest that there may be another idea in the play, which explains the phrase that food "fills up" the psyche. Xuthus says he intends to cheer Ion with feasting and then take him to Athens as a "sightseer/viewer" (656 *axô theatên*). This is the same word Ion uses when he asks whether Xuthus has come to see the sites in Delphi, and it draws in the audience of the fifth century, each of whom is a *theatês*, a "viewer" of the play being staged. The collocation of seeing and eating invites comparison with the comment from Aristophanes' *Birds* (vv. 786–9) that the viewers of tragedy get hungry and would like to pop home for a snack. The possible comic tones of *Ion* have inspired reflection on the links with New Comedy and the Roman versions (Matthiessen (1990), Télo (1998)), but we should also recognize the connection with Old Comedy, a genre which makes good use of culinary metaphors to discuss tragedy (Wilkins (2000) 100).

There is reason to suppose that feast which closes many comedies is a way to get the audience on side, with actual food being distributed as the audience is explicitly invited to share in the feast at the end of Aristophanes' *Peace* and *Ekklesiasouzai*. Could we imagine, then, that Euripides stole a trick from comedy in producing *Ion*, and exploited the link between theatrical audience and feasting diners by distributing snacks at the end of the play as Ion and Creousa leave to return to Athens? Xuthus said that the arrival of Ion is a welcome ritual, and gifts, especially of food, were traditionally sent for the amphidromia ceremony introducing a child to the household (Athenaeus D 370c, quoting Ephippus 3 Kassel (= Eubulus F 148 Kassel)). If food was distributed to the audience, this would be a physical act of inclusion outdoing the psychological involvement of Athens which Aeschylus' achieved with his torchlit finale to the *Oresteia*. In this context, the idea that food is "good for the soul" might be interpreted as a way of ignoring the problematic issues raised by the play. In *Ion*, food feeds the soul not as a mild psychotropic like the modern idea of "a chocolate fix," but rather as a way of cementing social bonds and focussing on the immediate physical situation rather than past sufferings. If Apollo's behavior leaves a nasty taste in our mouth, can it be overcome with a generous helping of delicious food? This speculation may seem farfetched, but I offer it as a way of exploring ideas of the comic or serious tone of the play. Issues of tone are highly subjective, so a modern scholar might be advised to employ the term "truthiness" to any such discussions (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truthiness); let us be content to note that elements exist in *Ion* which could have a humorous edge, and that these elements need not detract from any serious intent, but rather function as counterpoints. In such a context, we can ask whether Euripides might have intended to affect the emotional state of his audience with something more than the dramatic presentation, urging a severe examination of Athenian identity, but adding honey to the medicine.

6 Conclusion

We often talk of the need to understand tragedy as a staged experience, where what we see is as important as the words and music that we hear. *Ion* may also remind us that our other senses are just as important; was there a soundscape of Delphi or an olfactory signature which could be recreated in the theater with herbs or cooking smells? We might be well advised to interpret *Ion* on a visceral level, rather than as simple viewers or critics. It is fitting, therefore, to finish with a line from an intriguing discussion of staging *Ion*, highlighting how our understanding of the play is intertwined with gendered responses to issues of biology: "In the process of creating theatrical productions over the last fifteen years, I have belonged to many non biological, temporary, but intensely bonded families" (Gamel (2001) 168). Creousa would definitely have seen her as part of the family.

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FURTHER READING

In addition to the works cited above, the commentary by Piero and Burian (1996) provides an excellent starting point for further investigation. The much vexed question of *Ion*'s generic status can be approached from many different angles. Readers are referred in particular to Kiso (1996) on dramaturgy, Thornburn (2001) on Apollo's comic links, and Troiano (1985) on character and genre. The link to rhetorical and philosophical concerns is well explored by Farrington (1991), and Clavo (2002) explores the influence of Gorgias over the end of the play.

The question of gender conflict is soundly articulated in Dunn (1990); while Hirata (1995) explores gendered attitudes towards the central act of exposure. The use of imagery in the play received a masterly exposition by Mastronarde (1975), and has been supplemented by recent specific investigations, including Thorburn (2000) on the significance of gold in the play. For those who are particularly troubled by the role of Apollo, two older articles by Gellie (1984) and Lloyd (1986) are worth reading for their thoughtful and balanced approach to the issue. The play's reception can be best approached with the short discussion by Lee (1999) of Euripides' influence on Milton,

CHAPTER 17
Significant Inconsistencies in Euripides' *Helen*

Deborah Boedeker

Helen was not one of Euripides' greatest hits. He did not win first prize when he presented it at the City Dionysia in the spring of 412, nor was it among his ten most popular dramas (probably selected as school texts) in later antiquity, those that survived in a medieval manuscript tradition. Like the nine other Euripidean "alphabetical plays," the fate of *Helen* hung by a slender thread: the text we have depends almost entirely on a single manuscript from the early 1300s. *Helen* did not go unnoticed, however, in contemporary Athens. A year after its performance, Aristophanes recalled it with citations and an extended parody in his *Thesmophoriazousai* (855–923; see Nieddu (2004)).

1 A Twisted Plot

As Aristophanes understood, *Helen* is remarkable not least for the playwright's choice of an unusual version of the Helen myth: unlike the familiar Helen of Homeric epic—and also of other Euripidean tragedies, such as *Trojan Women*—the protagonist never went to Troy. (See Wright, this volume, on Euripides' use of myths in this play and others.) Euripides was not the first to use this variant (Kannicht (1969) 1.21–48); in his famous retraction or "palinode" (fr. 15 *PMG*) the sixthcentury lyric poet Stesichorus had already declared:

That story is not true [*ouk est' etymos logos houtos*],

you did not go on the wellbenched ships,

you did not reach the towers of Ilium.

In the *Histories*, moreover, completed about a decade before *Helen*, Herodotus writes that he learned from Egyptian priests that Helen was in Egypt, not Troy, for the duration of the Trojan War (2.116–20).

Euripides also develops the further variant, although he probably did not invent it (Wright (2005) 79–115), that what did go to Ilion with Paris—what the war was fought for—was only an image (*eidolon*), a phantom likeness of Helen. This variant is mentioned in passing at the end of his earlier *Electra*, in a *deus ex machina* speech by Helen's deified brothers:

Helen . . . has come from the house of Proteus,

leaving Egypt. She did not go to the Phrygians

but, to cause strife and bloodshed among mortals, Zeus

sent an *eidolon* of Helen to Troy.

(Eur. *Electra* 1280–83)

In *Helen*, however, the protagonist herself tells us that Hera (not Zeus) fashioned the *eidolon* out of air. The goddess did this in order to thwart Aphrodite's promise to give Helen to Paris if he awarded her the prize in the infamous beauty contest. This phantom is what Paris took to Troy, Helen explains, while Hermes whisked her body away to Egypt. There she stayed, a chaste guest under good King Proteus' protection, waiting for Menelaus to come and take her home to Sparta, as Hermes told her would happen if she remained faithful to her husband.

When the drama opens, that equilibrium is about to end. Proteus is dead and Helen has sought asylum at his tomb, for his son, the new king Theoclymenus, is determined to marry her. Meanwhile, the Trojan War has resulted in many casualties, for which Helen is unjustly blamed. She is unexpectedly confronted with a Greek survivor of the war, Teucer, who has been exiled from home and ordered by Apollo's oracle to found a new city. Having made his way to Egypt to consult the king's prophetic sister Theonoe, Teucer is astonished to discover there a woman who so resembles the hated Helen. In answer to her questions, he reports that Troy has been utterly destroyed, that Menelaus is lost at sea and presumed to be dead, and that Helen's mother Leda killed herself in shame over her daughter's adultery. Without revealing her identity, Helen warns Teucer that no Greek man is safe in Theoclymenus' land. He departs without delay, having unwittingly dashed her hope of rescue and homecoming.

Helen's song of lament draws forth a sympathetic Chorus of captive Greek women, who advise her not to believe the worst before she has consulted Theonoe concerning the fate of Menelaus. Accompanied by the Chorus, Helen goes into the palace, where she will learn that her husband is not only alive but about to arrive in Egypt. And indeed, during their absence Menelaus enters and gives an account of his circumstances. He was shipwrecked nearby with his wife and a few surviving crewmembers, all of whom he has left behind in a cave. He seeks help at the palace gate, where a female gatekeeper rudely turns him away. When Helen returns from the palace, she is alarmed to see a bedraggled intruder near her asylumtomb. There follows an exquisitely protracted and nearly failed recognition scene: Helen recognizes Menelaus, but he clings to the notion that the phantom he brought from Troy is his true wife. At last one of his crew arrives to report that the *eidolon* has disappeared into the sky, after explaining its true nature—and the longseparated pair finally rejoice in their reunion.

But perils await: King Theoclymenus will kill any Greek who threatens his intended marriage to Helen. The couple beg Theonoe to act justly and honor her father's wishes by not telling the king that Menelaus has appeared. Although she realizes that there is mortal danger in betraying her brother's interests and disobeying his command, Theonoe consents, but stipulates that Helen and Menelaus will have to devise their own escape from Egypt. At first Menelaus

proposes to fight with Theoclymenus, as befits the conqueror of Troy; if that heroic attempt fails, he will kill both Helen and himself. Helen persuades her husband to accept a more practical and subtle plan. She will introduce Menelaus to Theoclymenus as a Greek sailor bringing news of her husband's shipwreck and death, and will beg the king to let them carry out his funeral at sea in proper Hellenic fashion.

The plot thus hangs in suspense when Theoclymenus finally enters, shocked to find Helen no longer in her place of asylum. She soon returns in full mourning guise, and her perilous plan unfolds successfully. The king puts under the command of the "Greek stranger" a fine ship equipped with all that is needed to honor the dead Menelaus: rowers, sacrificial victims, gifts of food and clothing. Menelaus' shipwrecked companions "happen" to appear as the vessel is being prepared, and are invited aboard to assist in the funeral. Once out to sea, the armed Greeks attack and kill the rowers, with Helen cheering them on, and sail for home—dramatic events reported to the king by an oarsman who managed to escape with his life. Theoclymenus is furious, especially with Theonoe for failing to alert him of Menelaus' arrival. Helen's divinized brothers the Dioskouroi, however, soon appear *ex machina* to reconcile the king to the gods' will. They foretell the couple's successful homecoming and postmortem blessings, and Theoclymenus concludes by praising Helen's virtue.

2 Diverse Interpretations

This highly inventive drama elicits a wide range of interpretations and notoriously resists categorization (see Segal (1971) 553–5 for a still useful overview). For some readers it is the most entertaining of all tragedies (von Schlegel (1817) 1.261), or at least a lighthearted escape from the recent disaster of the Sicilian Expedition (Post (1964) 118). Some critics, notably Gilbert Norwood ((1920) 260–2), have criticized *Helen* as superficial and sentimental. Others find in it a harsh critique of war and heroic *kleos* (for example Kannicht (1969) 1.53–7; Segal (1971) 568; Melzer (1994)). A number of scholars have pointed out that *Helen* evokes profound ritual and mythical themes, including the disappearance and return of Persephone (Wolff (1973); Foley (1992)), the acceptance of female sexuality (Swift (2010) 218–40), the regenerative effects of Dionysiac vigor (Bierl (forthcoming)), and Odyssean patterns of wandering, return, and recognition (Eisner 1980). Recent critical attention has focused especially on the play's philosophical concerns. As Peter Burian nicely puts it ((2007) 31), *Helen* is "overflowing with intellectual energy," and see Wright in this volume. To be sure, some experts (notably Dale (1967) xvi) advise against taking seriously its treatment of such topics; Norman Austin ((1994) 159–165 and *passim*) finds in *Helen* not so much a serious grappling with contemporary Athenian intellectual concerns as a clever appropriation or even parody of them.

However seriously one takes them, the play's philosophical resonances are many and varied (for critical surveys see Wright (2005) 226–37 and Allan (2008) 46–66). Above all the relationship between illusion and reality, so prominent in fifthcentury thought—the theme has even been called "hackneyed" in Euripidean drama (Arnott (1990) 5)—is reflected in every scene and addressed by every character (Segal (1971) provides an eloquent demonstration).

Matthew Wright has argued ((2005) 278–337) that the drama reflects the deep skepticism of Euripides' contemporary Gorgias about the possibility of human knowledge. As we have seen, Euripides uses different versions of the Helen myth in different tragedies; his choice or invention of the *eidolon* variant in *Helen* brilliantly allows him to develop what Segal ((1971) 561) calls the "epistemological and ontological focus" that characterizes the drama.

That focus is never more apparent than in the recognition scene between Menelaus and Helen, with its playful yet touching juxtaposition of sense perception and reality. When the long separated pair unexpectedly encounter one another near Proteus' tomb, Helen soon realizes that the unkempt vagabond is her husband, and tries to convince him that she is his wife:

(Men.)

My lady, you look just like Helen to me.

(Helen)

And you look to me like Menelaus. I don't know what to say.

(Men.)

You have correctly recognized a most unfortunate man.

(Helen)

Ah, after so long you come to the arms of your wife!

(Men.)

What wife? Take your hands off my robes!

(Helen)

The wife Tyndareus, my father, gave you.

. . .

(Men.)

I assure you, I am not one husband with two wives.

(Helen)

What other woman's bed do you control?

(Men.)

The one I am bringing from Phrygia, now hidden in a cave.

(Helen)

You have no other wife but me.

(Men.)

Surely you don’t mean that my mind is sound but my sight is failing?

(Helen)

But when you look at me don’t you think you see your wife?

(Men.)

Your body is like hers, but I cannot be sure.

(Helen)

Look for yourself; what proof more sure than that do you need?

(Men.)

You do look like her; this at least I don’t deny.

(Helen)

Then who shall teach you, if not your own eyes?

(Men.)

That’s where something’s wrong, because I have another wife.

(563–8, 571–81)

With unconscious irony, Helen insists that her appearance should convince Menelaus that she is his wife: he who has been misled for years by an image of Helen (as she well knows) is told to believe his own eyes.

3 Paradoxes and Discrepancies

The recognition scene is all the more unsettling because it neglects an important point raised not long before. While she still believed Menelaus to be dead, Helen told the Chorus that there were certain private signs by which the two of them would have been able to identify each other:

If only my husband were alive, we would have recognized each other by using tokens [*xymbola*] that were clear [*phanera*] to us alone.

(290–1)

Although some editors judge these lines to be part of an interpolated passage (in part because

there is a metrical irregularity in line 291), the textual problems can be resolved (Kannicht (1969) 2.95–97), and the lines well suit the dramatic situation. Not only does Helen's contrarytofact statement provide pathos, but it would also kindle audience interest: what *were* this couple's secret tokens?

The *xymbola phanera* she mentions clearly call to mind the "sure signs" (*sêmata empeda*) shared by Homeric Penelope and Odysseus, that most famous of longseparated couples, whose story intersects often with Euripides' drama (Eisner (1980)). Even after her guest has won the contest of the bow and killed the suitors, Penelope is still uncertain if he is really Odysseus; as she explains to Telemachus, there are signs known to the two of them alone (Homer *Odyssey* 23.106–10). And so, pretending to accept the visitor's claim to be her long lost husband, she orders their marriage couch to be drawn up outside the chamber. At this Odysseus cries out, rehearsing in detail how he himself had built the bed into a wellrooted olive stump. His spontaneous outburst is what convinces Penelope that this is truly her husband (Homer *Odyssey* 23.178–206). Euripides' Helen, however, produces no token of recognition, despite the *xymbola* she mentioned to the Chorus. Although she does declare that she is the wife given to Menelaus by her father Tyndareus (line 568), that wellknown fact is scarcely the stuff of "tokens that were clear to us alone."

It may be, as Allan ((2008) 182–3) suggests, that no token would persuade Euripides' Menelaus, convinced as he is that the *eidolon* is his wife. In addition, the hero, heavily invested in his effort to regain her, would be loathe to agree that the Trojan War was fought for a mere image. Nevertheless, it is puzzling that despite her desperation—

Ah me! Who was ever more miserable than I am?

Those I love best are leaving me, and I shall never reach

the Hellenes or my own fatherland

(594–6)

—Helen does not even attempt to provide proof of her identity, whether through a physical artifact or a shared memory. Menelaus does not accept that the woman before him is his wife until an old seaman arrives from the Greeks' cave to report that the *eidolon* just disappeared into the air, after explaining its nature and exonerating Helen. In short, dramatic expectations are raised when Helen refers to the couple's private tokens, but they come to naught.

This discrepancy could be dismissed as trivial, were it not one of many surprises and anomalies in *Helen*, where questions arise that are not resolved and the path of the plot is strewn with red herrings (Arnott (1978)) for characters and spectators alike. When a dramatis persona mistakes appearance for reality, as Menelaus does with the *eidolon* or Theoclymenus with the funeral/escape plot, the external audience may enjoy a position of superior knowledge. But that audience also is often confronted with uncertainty and unmet expectations. This phenomenon is by no means unique to *Helen*, yet this drama's incongruities are remarkable in their number and variety. Cumulatively they produce an aura of imbalance or inconsistency that characterizes the tragedy as a whole, complementing its focus on illusion

versus reality. It is this phenomenon that I want to explore more closely in the remainder of my essay.

As with the protagonist's forgotten *xymbola*, elsewhere too the text raises an expectation that will remain unfulfilled, a device that has been called "counterpreparation" (Taplin (1977) 94). Another example occurs in the opening lines when Helen introduces the drama's exotic setting. The previous king of Egypt was Proteus, she says, who married "one of the undersea girls, Psamathe, after she left the marriagebed of Aeacus" (6–7). The striking variant, otherwise unattested, that this Nereid abandoned her famous Greek husband and married a king of Egypt, is presented positively or at least neutrally by Helen. For the audience, the obvious parallel to Helen's own bestknown story might sow doubts about her future with Menelaus (Burian (2007) 191; contra, Allan (2008) 146)—especially when we learn that the new king is eager to marry her. Such doubts will bear no fruit, however, for this Helen will go to great lengths *not* to wed the king of Egypt but to stay faithful to her Greek husband (62–5, and *passim*). It appears that Euripides invented or alluded to the obscure tale about Psamathe precisely in order to raise a false parallel to Helen's situation.

The characterization of Theoclymenus also offers surprises. When the new king is first mentioned (lines 9–10, a passage deemed corrupt by some editors), Helen explains that he was called *theoklymenos* "because he carried out his life in reverence to the gods"—as if its components meant "he who listens to [*kluô*] the gods [*theoi*]," rather than the etymologically more plausible "he who has fame [*kleos*] from the gods." The name presumably reflects less on Theoclymenus himself than on his pious father Proteus (see Allan (2008) 146–7), just as Astyanax "lord of the city" is named for an attribute of his heroic father Hector (*Iliad* 6.403). In any case, Helen ascribes to the new king behavior that sharply contrasts with his "most virtuous" (*sôphronestaton*, line 47) father:

> As long as
>
> Proteus saw the light of the sun
>
> I was safe from marriage, but since he has been hidden
>
> in earth's darkness, the dead man's son
>
> **is hunting to marry** [*thêrai gamein*] me. Honoring my husband of old,
>
> I fall on this tomb of Proteus,
>
> a suppliant, that he may save my marriagebed for my husband.
>
> (60–5)

The image of Theoclymenus as hunter becomes especially ominous when Helen tells Teucer that the king is away from the palace, "trusting his hounds in beast **killing** slaughters [*en phonois thêro**kton**ois*—a florid expression for an animal hunt] and he **kills** [***ktein**ei*] any Greek he finds" (154–5; Burian (2007) 149 and Allan (2008) 154 discuss hunting imagery in *Helen*.)

The servant who opens the palace door to Menelaus reinforces this negative portrait of the king. She displays a notable lack of hospitality toward the unkempt suppliant, but finally explains that she is hostile to Greeks only because she fears her master:

Get away from the palace. Something is happening inside

that's causing frenzy in the tyrant's house.

You've come at no good time, and if my master

catches you, your guestgift will be death.

I am not really like this, but wellmeaning to Greeks—I gave you

bitter words because I fear my master.

(477–82)

Theonoe too knows how her brother would react if she did not use her prophetic knowledge to warn him about Menelaus' presence. When Helen begs her not to tell Theoclymenus that Menelaus has come, the prophetess replies:

In the end, it is up to me whether, as Kypris wants,

I tell my brother that he is here and so destroy him,

or standing with Hera, I save your life,

keeping it secret from my brother, who orders me to tell

him if ever you happen to arrive in this land.

[Who will go and let my brother know that this man

is here, so that I will be safe?]

(887–93)

Many Euripideans (for example Mastronarde (1979) 105–13) believe that lines 892–3, textually flawed, were interpolated. But the text can be ameliorated by a small emendation in 892 (reflected in my translation; see Burian (2007) 246 for lucid discussion), and accord well with Helen's fear that Theonoe will let her brother know Menelaus is in the palace (819–23, discussed below). They also foreshadow Theoclymenus' attempt to murder his "treacherous" sister when he finds that she did not inform him (1624–41). I agree with those (for example Dale (1967) 126; Kannicht (1969) 2.236–7) who accept the gist of these lines (perhaps following a lacuna) as plausible: Theonoe expresses wellfounded awareness of her brother's wrath.

The audience thus has been consistently prepared for a volatile, dangerous Theoclymenus, driven by his allconsuming desire for Helen. Apart from the problematic passage in the prologue that explains his name in terms of "reverence to the gods" (9–10, see above), there has been no hint of redeeming qualities. When the king finally appears, however, as he returns

from the hunt, he does not present a wholly negative figure. His first words resound with filial piety:

Hail, tomb of my father. At the doorway

I buried you, Proteus, so that I could greet you,

and always, when departing and when coming home,

I your son Theoclymenus address you, father.

(1165–8)

In addition, Theoclymenus respects the tomb as Helen's asylum (for example line 1178). As for being a bloodthirsty hunter, he tells his servants to take the hounds and huntingnets (***thêr****ôn brochous*) into the palace (1169–70), but says not a word about slaughtered beasts. Ironically, Theoclymenus himself is now worried about a hunter: a Greek man may be "hunting [***thêr****ômenon*] to steal Helen" (1175). The king even blames himself for allowing this to happen:

I have reproached myself a great deal,

for I do not punish evildoers with death.

(1171–2)

Theoclymenus then notices that Helen is no longer at the tomb. Assuming that someone has spirited her out of Egypt, he orders a swift pursuit. Helen returns very soon, however, in her guise as a grieving widow. Immediately the king's demeanor changes again; he asks with apparent interest and sympathy why she is weeping and dressed in mourning clothes. Has she had ominous dreams, or received bad news from home (1186–92)? When she tells him that Menelaus is dead, he responds, "I do not rejoice in your words, although they are good for me" (1197, unnecessarily rejected as spurious by some editors). Soon he shows sympathy as well for the senseless sufferings at Troy: "O Priam and land of Troy, how you perish in vain!" (1220).

The hunting theme soon recurs, with yet another twist. In the prologue, as we saw, Helen described Theoclymenus as hunting to marry (***thêr****ai gamein*, 63) her; therefore she took refuge as a suppliant (*hiketis*) at the tomb of Proteus (65). But now Helen seems to agree to marry Theoclymenus ("Begin now with my wedding," 1231, although her words are ambiguous). She embraces the king's knees as *his* suppliant (*hiketis*) until he asks to what end she is hunting (***thêrôs*** ') *him* (1238). As the audience knows, she wants a ship that will enable her escape with Menelaus, but what she requests is to lay her husband to rest through offerings at sea.

Theoclymenus the barbarian *tyrannos* now behaves courteously, generously, and almost deferentially to the "Greek stranger" whose news of Menelaus' fatal shipwreck—along with his supposed expertise in Greek rituals—will (so the king thinks) allow him finally to achieve his marriage with Helen:

I will not send you away with empty hands

once you have done what pleases her [Helen]. You brought me

splendid news, so instead of your lack of clothing

you will get a garment and food, to go back to your fatherland,

since I see that things are wretched for you now.

(1280–4)

When the plans are complete for Menelaus' funeral rites, Theoclymenus responds even more hospitably, inviting the "Stranger" to

hurry back home with my wife,

so that after you have celebrated her wedding with me

you may be sent off to your home, or stay here and prosper.

(1436–40)

Theoclymenus' character, then, appears somewhat more nuanced and less brutal than the audience was led to expect before seeing him in person. Flickers of piety, kindness, and generosity appear, although they are easily effaced by his overwhelming desire to possess Helen, the trait that dominates his persona. The king is not unique in this compulsion, of course; he shares it with others in the traditional story—notably Theseus, Menelaus, and Paris, fellow victims of the fatal beauty that Helen so selfconsciously laments (for example 25, 236–7, 260–6, 375–85).

His determination to marry Helen renders Theoclymenus violent, not only against a potential rival but against his nearest and dearest as well. When he learns that the Greek couple has escaped, he becomes murderously angry with Theonoe, who misled him with her silence about Menelaus' arrival in Egypt:

I will punish the sister who betrayed me,

who saw Menelaus in the palace but did not tell me.

She shall never again lie to another man with her prophecies.

(1624–6)

Nonetheless, Theoclymenus, "he who heeds the gods" according to the dubious etymology in lines 9–10, lives up to his name when the Dioskouroi appear and explain that his marriage with Helen was not destined to be, since the Olympians wanted Helen to return home with Menelaus and ultimately to become a goddess herself (1642–79). He agrees immediately, and warmly praises Helen's virtue:

Twin sons of Zeus and Leda, I shall give up
the quarrels I had before about your sibling.
Let her go home, if that seems best to the gods,
and no longer would I kill my own sister.
Know that you two are born from the same blood
as a very fine and virtuous [*sôphronestatês*] sister.
Fare well, for the sake of Helen's most noble
mind [*gnômês*], which is not found in many women.
(1680–87)

It is typical that the addressee of a *deus ex machina* concurs without delay (Allan (2008) 345 *ad* 1680–87), but Theoclymenus goes well beyond compliance with his fulsome praise of Helen. What he praises, moreover, is the virtue of her mind, not the beauty of her body. Once freed from his compulsive desire, Proteus' son can fan the sparks of piety and humanity he showed when he greeted his father's tomb, sympathized with Helen's grief, and dealt hospitably with the "Greek stranger" who brought news of Menelaus' death—contrary to the expectation that was shaped by all that Helen, the gatekeeper, and even Theonoe said about him.

Theoclymenus' angry threat, "She shall never again lie to another man with her prophecies" (1626), points to another discrepancy in *Helen* between what the audience is led to believe about a character and what s/he actually does. (On tensions between tragic speech and action see Mastronarde (1979).) Theonoe is consistently presented as a gifted and reliable prophet. When she came of age, Helen says in the prologue, she "came to know divine things, things that are and things that will be" (13–14), a prophetic ability inherited from her grandfather Nereus (15), who is memorably described by Hesiod as "unerring and truthful" (*Theogony* 233). Teucer sails to Egypt in order to consult her about founding his new city (144–6). The Chorus calls Theonoe "the girl who knows all things" (317–18), and advises Helen to consult her "to learn correctly" the fate of Menelaus (320). Theonoe's dramatic entrance, moreover, with attendants to purify the path she treads and the air she breathes, showcases her godliness (865–72).

Paradoxically, it is Theonoe's very prescience and trustworthiness that spell the greatest danger when Helen and Menelaus try to plan their escape from Egypt. Their only chance, Helen concludes, is if Theoclymenus does not find out that Menelaus is there:

(Men.)

He will not know me for who I am, I'm certain; and who will tell him?

(Helen)

He has an ally inside who is equal to the gods.

(Men.)

Some prophetic voice, seated deep within the palace?

(Helen)

No—his sister; they call her Theonoe.

(Men.)

Her name is oracular, but tell me what she does.

(Helen)

She knows everything and will tell her brother you are here.

(Men.)

Then I will die, since I will not escape her notice.

(818–24, cf. 857–64)

The couple must persuade Theonoe not to reveal Menelaus' presence. This they do successfully by calling on her pity, loyalty to Proteus' values, and concern for a virtuous reputation (lines 894–1029).

When she agrees to help them, Theonoe tells Helen and Menelaus she will deceive her brother only with silence:

. . . I will be silent [*sigêsomai*]

about the things for which you supplicated me,

and I will never be my brother's advisor in folly . . .

You must find an escape yourselves;

as for me, I will stay out of the way and be silent [*sigêsomai*].

(1017–23, excerpted)

It turns out, however, that Theonoe tells an outright lie (offstage), as Helen reports to the Chorus:

Proteus' daughter, helping to conceal our escape,

when asked whether my husband was here,

[told her brother he is dead,]

said that he does not see the sunlight—for my sake.

(1370–3; 1372 is probably an interpolation)

After being consistently presented by Helen, Teucer, and the Chorus as omniscient and trustworthy, Theonoe here shows another side. More than truthfulness and loyalty to her brother she values justice and filial piety—both of which lead her to support Helen's marriage to Menelaus—despite the danger that silence (let alone falsehood) will bring her.

Theonoe's lie is all the more significant because the value of seers is emphatically questioned in *Helen*. In a passage that has been criticized—too harshly, I believe—as semicomic (Arnott (1973) 62–3; contra, Galeotti Papi (1987) 31), or as dispensable if not largely interpolated (Burian (2007) 237), Menelaus' servant and the Chorus agree that human prophets are worthless (744–60), especially because the seers (*manteis*) Calchas and Helenus never told the Greeks or Trojans about the *eidolon* at Troy. This judgment apparently contradicts the Chorus' earlier attitude toward prophecy, when they advised Helen to consult "allknowing" Theonoe (317–20, discussed above). To be sure, Theonoe's divine knowledge differs in some respects from that of a *mantis* like Calchas, for she seems to intuit reality rather than interpreting external signs; nonetheless, Theoclymenus refers to his sister's prophecies explicitly as *manteumata* (1626). In the end, we are left with famous seers who failed to prevent disaster at Troy and a revered prophet in Egypt who lies about what she knows, albeit in the name of justice. Supernatural knowledge is alternately praised, trusted, skeptically scrutinized, even dismissed; the drama suggests that, as with so many other matters, no consistent conclusion can be reached.

4 Formal Anomalies, and a Most Unusual Chorus

Along with inconsistencies such as these in the text, stagecraft in *Helen* often deviates from tragic norms. Anne Burnett ((1971) 75–100), examining Euripides' distortions of familiar tragic plot patterns, describes *Helen* as a conventional suppliant drama that becomes an escape intrigue, and ends (thanks to Theonoe's courageous decision) with a glimpse of high tragedy. In addition to striking structural shifts, the play has many other dramaturgical surprises. Geoffrey Arnott, who took special interest in Euripidean theatrical novelties, considers that in these matters *Helen* is unsurpassed in Greek tragedy (Arnott (1990) 8–9).

In the interest of brevity, I will focus especially on the Chorus, which is involved in anomalies from the moment they enter the orchestra (see also Murnaghan (2013) and in this volume). At the end of the prologue, after Helen hears from Teucer that Menelaus is lost at sea, she begins to sing a lyric lament:

Winged girls,

maiden daughters of Earth,

Sirens, may you come

bringing to my songs of woe a Libyan

reed, or panpipes, or lyres; may you

send tears suited to my grievous sorrows,

sufferings to my sufferings, songs to my songs,

music in harmony with my laments . . .

(167–74)

As if on cue (although they are not Sirens!) the Chorus enters, singing the same melody (179–90) that Helen just began (167–78). This metrical relationship between prologist and Chorus is unique in extant tragedy (Willink (1990) 77)) and suggests the close relationship of Chorus and choregos, which Anton Bierl (forthcoming) argues will aid in Helen's social and sexual reintegration. Helen addresses the Chorus as "Greek girls, **prey** of a **barbarian oar**" (91–2), using terms she also applies to her own experience (62–3, 234). Our curiosity is whetted about these young captives, but we will learn no more of their story.

The Chorus now takes an unusually active dramatic role (Burian (2007) 17), telling Helen to consult Theonoe about Menelaus' fate (317–21); they even go with her into the palace. Only rarely in extant tragedy does a Chorus leave the orchestra, and nowhere else does one accompany an actor into the *skênê* (Arnott (1990) 10–11). The suddenly empty stage allows for Menelaus' unique entrance, with a long speech (often compared to a second prologue) and fruitless encounter with the gatekeeper. When Helen returns with the Chorus, all rejoicing in Theonoe's good news, she sees Menelaus lurking nearby but perceives him only as a threat to her safety; then follows the eccentric recognition scene. The whole episode deviates markedly from norms of standard tragic practice (Burnett (1971) 80–5, Arnott (1990)).

As Helen and Menelaus forge their escape plot, Helen asks the Chorus to support them with their silence, adding vaguely "in case we, being saved ourselves, may be able to save you too some time" (1387–9). That possibility is never mentioned again, in contrast to the closely parallel situation in *Iphigenia in Tauris* (*IT* 1067–8, 1431–85), where Athena intervenes to save a Chorus of Greek women from the fury of a barbarian king, as another Hellenic princess escapes. In *Helen*, however, after their active role advising and supporting Helen, the loyal Chorus is relegated to an obscure fate.

A tragic Chorus' complicit silence is not unusual. In *Helen*, however, as in *IT*, it places them in real danger, which would motivate the Chorus' misleading words when Theoclymenus learns that Helen has fled with the "stranger": "I would never have thought that Menelaus could have escaped both your notice and mine, King, as he did when he was here" (1619–20). Theoclymenus immediately rushes toward the palace to avenge himself on his treacherous sister. At that point, if we accept the manuscript's muchdisputed designation of the Chorus

[leader] as interlocutor here,[1] Euripides stages a physical confrontation between Chorus and actor that is “unique in extant tragedy” (Allan (2008) 338–9):

(Chor.)

You! Where are you going, master?

(Theoc.)

Where justice commands me; get out of my way.

(Chor.)

I won’t let go of your robe; you are rushing to great evils.

(Theoc.)

Will you, a slave [*doulos*], rule over masters?

(Chor.)

Yes, my mind is in the right place.

(Theoc.)

Not for me! If you won’t let me . . .

(Chor.)

. . . we certainly won’t let you!

(Theoc.)

. . . kill a most evil sister . . .

(Chor.)

. . . no, a most righteous one.

. . . . .

(Theoc.)

You seem to be longing to die.

(Chor.)

Then kill me; but your sister

you will not kill, not with our consent—since for noble slaves

it is most glorious to die for one's masters.
(1627–32, 1639–41)

At this moment the Dioskouroi appear, commanding Theoclymenus to stop. Their concern is for Theonoe, however, and Helen; they pay no heed to the *doulos* (whether this is the Chorus leader or someone else) who has just risked her (or his) life to defend the prophetic maiden.

5 Final Indeterminacy

By the denouement of the play, we have encountered multiple unfulfilled expectations, dramaturgical anomalies, and inversion of familiar tragic patterns. Inconsistencies occur even in what seemed to be the drama's central values. At first, deception or illusion (via the *eidolon*) had dreadful results for Helen's reputation, her family, and especially for all who suffered in the Trojan War. As Eric Downing (1990) points out, however, by the end of the drama deception becomes a positive mode. Helen's feigned mourning and Menelaus' false identity make possible what the audience has been led to desire: reunion of husband and wife, recovery of a damaged reputation, return home for Greek warriors so long away. Even the pious Theonoe contributes to this deception. Most paradoxically, in a tragedy with so much emphasis on "the foolishness and destruction of war" (Segal (1971) 568), the couple's escape entails the brutal slaughter of unarmed oarsmen, in a battle for the "real" Helen, who now spurs on the Greeks, crying, "Where is the glory of Troy? Show the barbarians!" (1603–4).

In *Helen* certainties disappear, although the drama's goal, the restoration of Helen, remains consistent. That achieving this goal will be convoluted accords with—is almost guaranteed by—the fact that Helen herself is the most conspicuous exemplar of indeterminacy in Greek myth (see for example Bassi (1993); Austin (1994); Fulkerson (2011); Blondell (2013)). Euripides' selfconscious protagonist even explicitly calls into question her own myth. As she refers to her miraculous birthstory, Leda's deception by the Zeusswan, she deconstructs it by saying "if this story is accurate" (*ei saphês houtos logos*, 21), calling to mind Stesichorus' famous Helen palinode (discussed above), "this story is not true" (*ouk est' etumos houtos logos*). (See Blondell (2013) 205 for another allusion to Stesichorus.)

In the anomalous world of Euripides' *Helen* human beings make their way, imperfectly, toward ends that are seldom purely or surely attained. Knowledge is always limited, motives are always subject to question, success does not come unmixed. *Helen*'s many red herrings, dramaturgical surprises, and other inconsistencies are not to be explained away, then, nor should they be understood (*pace* Arnott) primarily as theatrical techniques to engage audience interest. They are integral to this playful, poetic, and provocative drama.

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FURTHER READING

This brief selection of works, most of them recent and all in English, is meant to be a starting point for readers who would like to pursue topics raised in this chapter. In the past decade two fine commentaries on *Helen* have appeared in English: Burian (2007) is an accessible work with engaging introductory material, Greek text, and facing English translation. Allan (2008) presents a new edition of the text, with a rich commentary directed toward Hellenists and extensive bibliography. For enduring and influential humanistic studies of the drama, see Segal (1971) and C. Wolff (1973), "On Euripides' *Helen*" (*Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 77: 61–84). Murnaghan (2013) illuminates many aspects of the Chorus in *Helen*, while *Helen*'s philosophical background is discussed by D.J. Conacher (1998), *Euripides and the Sophists* (London), which includes an interesting discussion of (possible) parodies of sophistic thought in *Helen*. Wright (2005) offers a provocative discussion of *Helen*, along with *Iphigenia in Tauris* and *Andromeda*; of particular interest is his chapter "Tragedy of Ideas." Finally, and more generally, D. Mastronarde (2010) *The Art of Euripides: Dramatic Technique and Social Context* (Cambridge) gives a lucid interpretation of the playwright and his work, while Blondell (2013) discusses with verve and learning the figure of Helen throughout Greek

literature. All these works include further bibliography.

Note

1 The Laurentian manuscript designates Theoclymenus' interlocutor as XO, i.e. Chorus (here, the Chorus leader speaking singly). Most modern editors reject the attribution, following Clark (1858), and attribute the lines to an unannounced Servant or to the Messenger, but see Kannicht (1969) 2.422–4 and Allan (2008) 338.

CHAPTER 18
Phoenician Women

Anna A. Lamari

Although it gained only second prize at its premiere at the Dionysia, Euripides' *Phoenician Women* enjoyed great popularity in antiquity, as evidenced by its reproduction in numerous papyri (which surpass in number those of any other tragic text), its rich pictorial representations from the late third century, as well as its parody in an homonymous comedy by Aristophanes (fr. 570 K–A). Regardless of the play's popularity, literary judgments of *Phoenician Women* that found their way into the ancient prefatory supplements found fault with the complexity and richness of its plot, complaining that the play is "overfull," with parts "stitched on to no purpose" (Hyp. E. *Phoen*. I 243.9, 11–12 Schwartz 1887). At the same time though, the ancient scholiasts also give reasons for the play's success: the emotional effects caused by its many deaths, and its maxims (Hyp. E. *Phoen*. I 243.1–7 Schwartz 1887). *Phoenician Women* was one of the most favored plays amongst cultivated public in the Greek and Roman world, as documented by ancient writers such as Plutarch, Lucian, or Athenaeus (Cribiore (2001) 199). Byzantine scholars appreciated its didactic potential and selected it as one of the three Euripidean tragedies (known as the Byzantine triad) that would be taught in schools and reproduced in hundreds of copies. The play has also had an influence on other works on literature. Euripides' version of the fratricidal strife is being reflected in Seneca's *Phoenician Women* (62 BCE), Statius' *Thebaid* (92), Jean Baptiste Racine's *La Thébaide, ou, les Frères Ennemis: Étéocle et Polynice* (1664), as well as Jane Robe's *The Fatal Legacy* (1723).

1 Synopsis

Phoenician Women begins unexpectedly. Jocasta is still alive even after she has discovered that she married her son and murderer of her husband, in contrast to earlier accounts in which she commits suicide. Being the first one to appear onstage, she outlines the history of the Theban saga and gives the details of the fraternal strife: trying to avert Oedipus' curse against them, Eteocles and Polyneices agreed upon a yearly yield of rule. Being the youngest, Polyneices voluntarily left the city first, but after he took power, Eteocles did not finally comply with their initial arrangement. As a result, Polyneices and his Argive entourage plan to seize Thebes. When Jocasta leaves the stage, Antigone appears with a Servant on top of the *skēnē* building. Via a *teichoskopia* ("viewing from the wall"), they give information about the attack of the Argive leaders. Polyneices then enters the city under truce, meeting the Chorus and Jocasta. Their emotional exchange details the miseries of exile and injustice that Polyneices is suffering. An *agōn* leads to a heated encounter between the two brothers with Jocasta as the arbitrator. Polyneices stands for justice, whereas Eteocles desires power at any cost. Since the *agōn* has left no hopes for reconciliation, Eteocles prepares for battle.

Teiresias is then brought on stage and advises that Thebes will be saved only if Creon sacrifices his own son Menoeceus. Deceiving his father who opposes such a possibility, Menoeceus commits suicide. Action then moves outside the city. The Messenger informs Jocasta that the battle was victorious for the Thebans, but unfortunately Eteocles and Polyneices have decided to fight each other in single combat. With Antigone, Jocasta rushes to the battlefield to try to avert the fratricide. A Messenger then describes the duel, the fratricide, and Jocasta's suicide over the corpses of her sons. Antigone laments the death of her relatives and Oedipus appears at last, departing with his daughter for a life of exile. The Chorus is made up of women of Phoenicia, who are trapped in war on their way to Delphi. Sharing ancestral ties with Thebes, they are sympathetic to the toils of the royal family.

2 Date and Trilogy

Since the ancient hypothesis compiled by Aristophanes of Byzantium is too corrupt to offer trustworthy information on the play's date or companion plays, both issues need to be addressed via technical criteria and indirect evidence. Dramatic features such as the use of meter, the large number of speaking characters, the length of the play, and the numerous resolutions in the iambic trimeters point to a late composition, during the last decade of Euripides' life. An ancient scholion on Aristophanes' *Frogs* (line 53) asks why Aristophanes alludes to *Andromeda* and not to the "more recent and fine" *Hypsipyle*, *Phoenician Women*, *or Antiope*. This means that the play was first performed at some point between the first performances of *Andromeda* (412 BCE) and *Frogs* (405 BCE), but no further specification is possible. After the production of *Orestes* in 408 Euripides left for Macedon (*TrGF* 1 DID C19) and it is likely that no other Euripidean premieres were staged in Athens. This suggests that *Phoenician Women* would belong to the trilogies of 411, 410, or 409. Further narrowing of dates is difficult to deduct, since a performance of say 409 might be more suitable to the "more recent" comment of the ancient scholiast, but does not suit the criterion of resolutions of the iambic trimeters, best served by a date closer to 412 BCE.

The problem of dating the first production of *Phoenician Women* is inseparable from the quest of the companion plays with which it formed a trilogy. The ancient scholion on the *Frogs* groups the play with *Antiope* and *Hypsipyle*, while the ancient hypothesis of Aristophanes of Byzantium with *Oenomaus* and *Chrysippus*. Scholarship has leaned towards the one or the other trilogy using mostly arguments based on metrical analysis or thematic coherence. Unfortunately, the available evidence does not leave room for certainty over the one or the other grouping, although scholars are more often inclined towards grouping the *Phoenician Women* with *Antiope* and *Hypsipyle*.

3 Staging and Features of the FifthCentury Premiere

On the far side of the *orchēstra*, the stage building (*skēnē*) was a wooden construction with at least one large double door and a usable roof (Storey and Allan (2005) 40). The *skēnē* background stood for the Theban palace, and the central door would be used for the entrances

and exits of Jocasta, Antigone, Oedipus, and Eteocles. The palace set included two stage altars (274, 632) or several propstatues (632), perhaps with small altars before them. The *teichoskopia* scene after the prologue demands an elevated area of performance, from which Antigone and the Servant view the Argive army outside the city walls: presumably the flat rooftop of the *skēnē* (Mastronarde (1990) 255–7, (1994) 178). Of the two side entrances (*eisodoi*), one led to the city walls and outside the city, the other to places within the city.

Props would include several statues (632), swords and armor for Polyneices and Eteocles, Teiresias' prophetic lots, the staffs of Teiresias and Oedipus. The corpses of Eteocles, Polyneices, and Jocasta that are rolled on stage (on *ekkyklēmata*) by the end of the play would be represented by dummy corpses or by silent extras. In terms of masks and costumes, the text points to a mask of an old woman, with short hair and a black costume for Jocasta (302, 372–3, 1318). The Servant wears a mask of an old man (103) and his costume is that of a slave (94). Antigone is a young maiden (106) and wears a luxurious robe and veil in the first part of the play, but in the *exodos* she reappears without headband and with her garment let down (1490–1). It is possible that by the *exodos* Antigone is also using a mask of grief. Eteocles and Polyneices are young men (1360) bearing swords (267, 596), whereas Menoeceus is an adolescent (947). Teiresias and Oedipus are blind aged men (834, 896, 1539, 1619). Creon too wears a mask of an old man (1318). The Messengers are both soldiers (1213, 1468–9). The exotic identity of the Chorus seems to have been reflected also on their garments (278–9).

Performing ancient Greek tragedy was a vocally and physically demanding endeavor. The speaking roles of Euripidean plays were distributed among three male actors, who would have to swap roles and perform versatile characters. Certainly just a few Athenians were talented enough for the great city festival, which together with the fact that actors were trained at state expense were perhaps partially responsible for the three actors convention (Taplin (2003)10). The most demanding parts in terms of performance were traditionally given to the most talented actors, the *prōtagōnistai* ("first actors"), who would also compete for a prize in the acting contest. The *deuteragōnistai* and the *triragōnistai* would perform the rest of the parts. Throughout the play, each actor could perform role bits of several characters, swapping costumes and masks, practically using his voice as the only identification (Csapo (2010) 126). According to ancient commentators (line 93), the *prōtagōnistēs* who delivers the prologue as Jocasta would have also been Antigone in the *teichoskopia*. In this case, this same actor could have possibly also played Teiresias' role, while the *deuteragōnistēs* could have played the Servant, Polyneices, Creon, and the first Messenger. A third actor could have performed the less demanding parts from the role of Antigone, and the roles of Eteocles and Menoeceus (Mastronarde (1994) 16). If the ancient scholiasts were wrong, then the roles of Antigone and Jocasta could have been assumed by different actors. The play's nonspeaking roles were the daughter of Teiresias, soldiers attending Eteocles, and possibly soldiers standing next to the corpses in the *exodos*.

4 *Phoenician Women* and Theban Myth

Fifthcentury spectators knew that the narration of the fraternal strife of Polyneices and

Eteocles would end with their mutual fratricide, and that Thebes would not be captured by the Argives. What they would not know, however, was through what variations and structure this traditional plot would be presented. Tragic poets embraced their spectators' familiarity with the tradition by incorporating deliberate allusions to older narratives, but simultaneously piqued their audience's interest by creating suspense through the *how*, the means of presentation of a mythical narrative. The poet unlocked a field of possible associations created by the emotional or stylistic charge of themes familiar to the audience, but also surprised the spectators by novel ways of presenting those themes.

The *Phoenician Women* draws on a popular mythical plotline. The toils of the Labdacids, the royal family of Thebes, were narrated well before Euripides' play, mainly by the poets of the "Theban section" of the Epic Cycle, Stesichorus, Pindar, the mythographers, as well as by Aeschylus and Sophocles. Literary treatments of the myth constructed a mythical panorama of the Theban saga, against which backdrop Euripides composed the *Phoenician Women*. In the *Works and Days*, Hesiod refers to the Labdacid family in passing, mentioning that the last members of the "generation of heroes" lost their lives at the gates of Thebes, in a war over Oedipus' fortune (Hesiod *Works and Days* 162–3). In a brief reference in the *Odyssey*, Odysseus lists the heroes he met in the Underworld, amongst whom is Epicasta (clearly a variant of the name Jocasta), who unknowingly married her son and committed suicide, while Oedipus continued to rule Thebes (Homer *Odyssey* 11.272–8). Whether Epicasta had children with Oedipus is left unclear, though it is probably unlikely (Finglass (2014) 360 n. 18). Besides, there appears to be an association regarding literary genres and the incestuous children that possibly sprung from this union. Incestuous offspring from Oedipus and his mother seems to be absent from epic but present in drama (Fowler (2013) 404).

Pausanias notes that the gods revealed the incest soon after Oedipus wedded Epicasta (9.5.11) and specifies that as narrated in the epic *Oedipodeia*, Oedipus had his children by his second wife, Euryganeia, daughter of Hyperphas (fr. 1 West (2003)). The *Oedipodeia* also presented the Sphinx as a devouring monster (fr. 3 West (2003)), but the surviving fragments are so limited that there is hardly anything else that we can be sure of. Tradition was more generous with another poem of the Theban Cycle, the *Thebais*. More fragments survive, and we can be sure that the poem narrated the conflict between Polyneices and Eteocles. The poem's opening line (fr. 1 West (2003)) reveals an Argive, not Theban (as in Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes* or Euripides' *Phoenician Women*) focus, suggesting that narration must have insisted more on the story of the Argives' unsuccessful expedition than on the Thebans' victorious defense. The two largest fragments of the *Thebais* narrate the beginning of the strife amongst Polyneices and Eteocles, caused by a curse from Oedipus, who was insulted when they offered him either wine in the goblet of murdered Laius (fr. 2 West (2003)), or an inferior portion of meat (fr. 3 West (2003)). The issues narrated in the *Thebaid* are continued in another Theban epic, the *Epigonoi*. As suggested by its title, this epic narrated the story of the descendants of the seven Argive generals who first attacked Thebes (fr. 1 West (2003)) and presumably included an account of the second expedition and subsequent fall of the city.

The question of the identity of the mother of Oedipus' children is also touched upon by the mythographers. A mythological narrative found in the ancient scholia on line 1760 of the

Phoenician Women is attributed to a certain Pisander (perhaps an epic poet of unknown date) and presents Oedipus having his children with Euryganeia after the death of Jocasta and his own blinding (*FGrHist* 16 fr.10). Antigone, Ismene, Eteocles and Polyneices, have Euryganea as their mother in Pherecydes too, who additionally reports that Oedipus also had children from Jocasta, namely Phrastor and Laolytus. In Pherecydes, there was also a third wife, Astymedusa, whom Oedipus married after Euryganeia's death (Pher. fr. 95 Fowler (2000); Davies (2014) 15–17).

The question of whether Oedipus begot children with his mother or with another woman comes up again in Stesichorus. The story is treated in a fragmentary poem, possibly called *Thebais* (Finglass (2014) 363). A wellknown papyrus (P. Lille 73 + 76 + 111c, fr. 97 Finglass (2014)) preserves more than one hundred lines of a speech delivered by a woman who is trying to dissuade her quarrelling sons from starting a civil war, proposing instead that one should inherit the throne and the other the paternal fortune. The identity of the woman speaking is not certain, but given the similarities of this narrative to the Theban tradition, she must either be Jocasta (Epicasta), or Oedipus' second wife Euryganeia. The poem also contains references to Polyneices, Eteocles, and Teiresias. If indeed Stesichorus' mysterious heroine is Jocasta, the lyric poet had achieved a double novelty. Not only did he predate the tragedians by presenting Oedipus having children with Jocasta, he even kept Jocasta alive to witness her sons' deaths, a mythical innovation otherwise only attributed to Euripides in the *Phoenician Women*. Although the meager data we possess make it unlikely that Stesichorus presented children born from the union of Oedipus and his mother, there is not enough evidence to rule out such a possibility. However, the dramatic *gravitas* provided by the presence of an incestuous woman who has committed the most appalling act in positions of political and civic authority seems greatly at home in Euripides, especially given the fact that throughout the *Phoenician Women*, the incest is clearly downplayed, presented more as awful sadness than as horrible shame (Finglass (2014) 365) and that Jocasta is also kept alive after the revelation of the incest in another Euripidean play, *Oedipus*.

Some important parameters of the Theban myth also feature in Pindar's second *Olympian*. The Theban lineage of Theron, in honor of whom the hymn was written, influenced the included mythical narrative which draws from the Theban cycle. According to Pindar, Laius received a prophecy that he would be killed by his own son. Contrary to dramatic treatments of the myth, Pindar presented the deaths of Polyneices and Eteocles as Oedipus' punishment for the murder of Laius and not as a result of Oedipus' cursing of his sons (*Olympian* 2.39–42). Pindar also alludes to the Theban saga elsewhere, mainly with references to Oedipus' exile (*Pythian* 4.263–9) and the second expedition against Thebes (*Olympian* 2.43–5; *Pythian* 8.41–55).

Stories from the Theban cycle feature in tragedies besides the *Phoenician Women*, such as Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*, Sophocles' *Antigone*, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, and *Oedipus at Colonus*, as well as Euripides' *Suppliants*. Before Euripides, Aeschylus and Sophocles also give Oedipus and Jocasta incestuous offspring. It does not follow though that the birth of incestuous children was a fifthcentury mythical addition. Dramatic treatments undoubtedly took advantage of the tragic pathos encompassed in the unconscious incest, which conversely might have been passed over for the sake of *decorum* in epic, or in later versions, even for the

sake of families who claimed descent from Polyneices and wanted to remove incest from their lineage (Mastronarde (1994) 21). Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes* contain the first known tragic reference to Oedipus' and Jocasta's incest (752–7). The other plays that accompanied *Seven Against Thebes* were *Laius*, *Oedipus*, and the satyr drama *Sphinx*. Information on the content of the first play of the trilogy come from scanty fragments (*TrGF* 3 frr. 121–2), but mostly from *Seven Against Thebes* itself, particularly the choral ode reviewing the entire course of events leading from Laius defiance of an oracular warning to the mutual killing of his two grandsons (720–91). Laius was the opening speaker in the homonymous play, which probably also featured the exposure of Oedipus, the murder of Laius (Sommerstein (2010) 84–5), and perhaps even the abduction of Chrysippus, the beautiful son of Pelops that Laius abducted and had sexual intercourse with (Kovacs (2009) 367). *Oedipus* may have included the revelation of the incest and the hero's subsequent selfblinding, while Oedipus' death and the quarrel of Eteocles and Polyneices may have been falling in the undramatized events between the stories of *Oedipus* and of *Seven Against Thebes* (Sommerstein (2008) 146). Aeschylus' treatment of the sorrows of the family seems to have insisted on the repercussions of defiance of divine warnings across three generations, as alluded to in *Seven Against Thebes* (742–56), where the Chorus highlights Laius' disobedience to Apollo's command not to beget any offspring. The Aeschylean trilogy presented a continuous crossgenerational thread, where one mistake succeeds another and Laius' seduction of Chrysippus is followed by Laius' disobedience to Apollo, his killing by his son, the incest between his wife and Oedipus, and the birth of the child they were never supposed to have. Oedipus will then curse his sons, after they make the mistake of offending him. They will finally die, terminating a long sequence of guilt and vengeance.

It is likely that Sophocles also connects Apollo's punishment to the Labdacids with Laius' earlier hybris. In *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the Pythian oracle might be presented as affecting only Laius and Oedipus, but it seems to have been given to Laius as a warning before Oedipus' birth (*Oedipus Tyrannus*, 711–19; Kovacs (2009)). The Delphic prophecy thus affects both generations (Laius' and Oedipus' simultaneously), being put into effect at the deadly meeting of Laius and Oedipus. In his *Antigone*, Sophocles emphasizes his heroine's devotion to familial and moral values. Antigone's dedication to her brother is also prominent in the *Phoenician Women*, as well as in the interpolated scene found in our manuscripts of *Seven Against Thebes*, which was probably added to the play so that it could follow on directly from a reperformance of the *Phoenician Women* (Hutchinson (1985) 209–11).

The *Seven Against Thebes* also includes the tumultuous relationship of Eteocles and Polyneices. In the Aeschylean play, Eteocles is the central figure, dedicated to the defense of the city, whereas Polyneices is sketched as the attacker of the city and does not even make it onstage. In the *Phoenician Women* Euripides innovates: Polyneices is an onstage character, able to present his version of the story. The Euripidean Polyneices pleads that he is innocent. According to Polyneices' report, it was Eteocles who first violated the agreement to rule in alternate years and so Polyneices' attack against Thebes constitutes a claim of his lawful inheritance. A similar violation of an initial agreement is alluded to in Euripides' *Suppliants* (150–3, 930–1), whereas in the *Antigone*, Creon blames Polyneices for attacking Thebes

(198–202, 280–9, 514–20) and the Chorus make a bitter pun on Polyneices' speaking name. In their first ode (100–61), the Chorus of the *Antigone* describe the sufferings from Polyneices' "contentious quarrels" (110–11), leaving no ground for justification of the expedition. Euripides seems to respond to all earlier portrayals of Polyneices, presenting him with a more sympathetic light and in contrast to Eteocles, with justice on his side.

Creon is familiar to the audience as the brother of Jocasta in Sophocles' *Antigone* and *Oedipus Tyrannus*, both of which preceded the *Phoenician Women*. In *Antigone*, he is an adamant defender of the city's laws, while in *Oedipus Tyrannus*, his main concern is to discover the murderer of Laius so as to free the city from the plague. His role is strikingly different in the *Phoenician Women*. Although his primary goal is to contribute to Thebes' safety, he puts family interest over that of the city, by urging his son Menoeceus to flee, even if Menoeceus' sacrifice is (according to Teiresias) necessary for Thebes' wellbeing. This brings us to Menoeceus, Creon's son, who makes his only appearance in surviving Greek tragedy in the *Phoenician Women*. Firmly linked to his glorious lineage (his name is that of his grandfather, Creon's father) Menoeceus deceives Creon and kills himself, putting civic over personal profit. Euripides' presentation of Creon's close family contains yet another deviation from previous treatments of the myth. Eurydice, Creon's wife commits suicide at the end of the *Antigone*, but is said to have died much earlier in the *Phoenician Women*, when Menoiceus was an infant. Leaving the young Menoecus motherless allows Euripides to create another innovation, that of the special bond shared by Jocasta and her nephew.

Amid all these variants, two key points emerge. First, the *Phoenician Women* incorporates a wide range of mythical information; second, Euripides adopts a sophisticated system of allusion, using puns for mythical variants that in the end he does not endorse. The *Phoenician Women* unravels the Theban mythical thread from an early point, alluding to Laius' disobedience to Apollo and the beginnings of the Labdacids' misfortunes. Furthermore, Euripides glances at the story that predated the quarrel of Polyneices and Eteocles, giving a full account of the events that led to the Argive expedition. He presents Creon's turnaround regarding civic duties, the sacrifice of Menoeceus, the actual duel, the brothers' deaths, the suicide of Jocasta, the battle which led to the final victory of the Thebans, the lamentations of Antigone, even Oedipus' final flight from the city. Alongside this unparalleled mythical span, Euripides builds his innovative variations. Depending on the degree of differentiation from earlier, dramatic or nondramatic versions of the myth, Euripides exploits the expectations of the audience, rekindling interest and increasing suspense. What is more, every deviation from earlier presentations of the myth would have unlocked a field of possible interpretations, inviting spectators to reevaluate every aspect pertaining to the mythical characters, their motives, as well as the true meaning of their actions (Burian (1997) 183). By creating a Theban mythical megatext (Segal (1986)) that incorporates the majority of the mythical details of the Theban saga and enriches them with new features, Euripides in the *Phoenician Women* creates a complex narrative interesting to audiences of different theatrical or mythical expertise. The play works as a Theban mythical map for those unacquainted with the details of the story of the Labdacids, as it also becomes fascinatingly innovative for the theatrically and mythically trained.

5 On and Off Stage: Space and the *Phoenician Women*

The most common division of space in drama is that between onstage and offstage. Onstage and offstage space correspond to onstage and offstage worlds, onstage featuring what the spectators can see, and offstage encompassing anything generated by their imagination and the narratives of the stage characters. In the *Phoenician Women*, offstage space is further subdivided to "nearby" and "remote." Nearby offstage space includes the inner parts of the palace and the battlefield across the outskirts of Thebes. Remote offstage space is shaped upon narratives about areas far away from Thebes. Onstage space in the *Phoenician Women* is thus the palace courtyard, while the offstage is either the inside of the palace and the wider area of the Theban walls (nearby), or Athens and Phoenicia (remote) (Lamari (2010) 161). Euripides' insistence on Thebes' locale in the *Phoenician Women* goes beyond that of Aeschylus' or Sophocles', with consistent topographical references to Theban landmarks such as the graves of Amphion and Zethus, Cithaeron, or the waters of Dirce and Ismenus.

Throughout the *Phoenician Women*, Euripides constructs an analogy of time and space, creating a chronotope between narratives of geography and time. In the play's prologue (1–201), Euripides sketches a Theban topography of time. Through references to the history of the Labdacids, Jocasta locates the play in time, bringing up two basic offstage dimensions: the outskirts of Thebes and the interior of the *oikos*, namely what is outside and what is inside. Allusions to the remote past and Cadmus' journey to Thebes (3–6) construct the remote offstage space, while references to the present, and to Oedipus' present condition (66), correspond to the nearby offstage space, the royal chambers of the palace, in which Oedipus lives a miserable and isolated life. Jocasta' narrative gaze paces from past to present, and from remote (Phoenicia) to nearby (interior of the palace) offstage space. In the last part of the prologue, the *teichoskopia*, Antigone and the Servant give detailed descriptions of the Argive warriors. Each flashback to the warriors' past is also a step back to their places of origin, that is to remote offstage space. Overall the city is presented as a nucleus of safety, surrounded by two threatening nearby offstage spaces: the interior of the palace and core of the incest, and the environs of Thebes, where the Argive attackers are about to take action. The orchestra, locked in, as it were, by two nearby offstage spaces, is a nucleus of safety amongst two nearby offstage areas, the outside war and the inside decay. The Theban walls and the city's seven gates work as the cusp between the two worlds, projecting a dividing line between safety and danger.

It is this border that Polyneices needs to cross in the long First Episode (261–637) when he enters the city. Apart from a sonorous metatheatrical comment, Polyneices' entrance into the orchestra is also indicative of his own mental dissociation: he feels uncomfortable and scared in the *polis* (263–4), although the space of the orchestra has been previously narratively registered as safe. Thebes and the nearby offstage space has become for Polyneices a place of memory. Polyneices refers to familiar places connected to his childhood in Thebes: the altars of the gods, the gymnasia, the spring of Dirce (366–8). Space works as drastically as time, and for Polyneices, the environs of Thebes register as past. Polyneices presents Thebes as a space of territorial, constitutional and legal interest (469–6), the assertation of which has made him

organize the expedition. Eteocles' speech is vague and curtailed (499–525). Their interaction creates the impression that references to detailed spatial elements add weight and authority to the speaker's argumentation, while spatial ambiguity conceals guilt.

While Creon and Eteocles organize the defense of Thebes in the next Episode (690–783), narrative weight and consequently spatial *gravitas* falls upon the staged *polis* and what the spectators can see (710, 712, 734, 738), but also on the walls as the boundary between the stage setting and the offstage area. A second intruder of the walls, Teiresias appears in the Third Episode (834–1018) coming from Athens, thus spreading the remote offstage world span. Spatial allusions to Athens by Teiresias here also include mythical and intertextual connotations to king Erechtheus and Euripides' homonymous play (*TrGF* 5.1 24), foreshadowing the necessity of the sacrifice of Menoeceus in parallel to the sacrifice of Erechtheus' daughter. Teiresias describes the environs of Thebes, i.e. the nearby offstage space, in dark and sinister colors. It is in this place where the dragon of Ares was born and killed by Cadmus that Menoeceus has to be sacrificed to purify the Earth (913–14). Creon presents the exile to the unknown, remote offstage world as lifesaving (978, 980–2), but Menoeceus maintains the terrifying feeling about the remote offstage space that persists throughout the play. Menoeceus finally follows the instructions of Teiresias and ends his life in the cave of Ares' dragon (1009–12). Nearby offstage space here holds conflicting connotations. It has given life to Earth's offspring (the dragon), but death to the Thebans, while now takes the life of Menoeceus, but brings salvation to Thebes.

The Thebans' successful defense of the city is described by the Messenger in the Fourth Episode (1067–1283). The episode puts special emphasis on local details, with references to the offstage positions of the Argive leaders (1104–38) which puzzle scholars regarding their possible historical correspondence (Berman (2007)87–115). The performance space of the orchestra is presented again as a balanced locus between the two nearby offstage areas: that of the war outside the walls and that of the interior of the palace. Both offstage spaces entail death, danger, and contamination, which however do not reach the orchestra. The walls, both those of the city and those of the palace, function as "seals": those of the city block the entry of danger and those of the palace the entry of infection. The episode ends with Jocasta advising Antigone to cross the walls, reach the battlefield, and avert the fratricide (1264–9). The spatial inversion of her position, from the palace to the battlefield, also marks her transformation to a more dynamic character. By this last episode, the spectators notice an antithetical spatial movement. Onstage characters leave the orchestra and offstage space is for the first time presented in hope of positive developments: Antigone hopes to meet Polyneices, Eteocles to win the duel, Jocasta to reconcile her sons. The offstage world however will tragically reconfirm its grimness with the triple deaths of Jocasta and her sons.

Deadly offstage space will be transferred onstage during the Exodos (1480–1766), when the bodies of Jocasta and the brothers are carried onstage with trolleys. It is only at this moment, when death has reached the stage, that Oedipus will finally appear (1539). His use of vocabulary can metaphorically apply to the Underworld, with sonorous doubleentendres like the word *thalamos* which means "chamber", but also "grave" (1541). His metaphorical return from the Underworld justifies the deadly, incestuous feel that has been created for the nearby

offstage space (interior of the palace) throughout the play. Once he is onstage, he faces again the necessity to leave, with Creon forcing him to exile (1589). Similarly to when he was locked inside the palace by Eteocles and Polyneices, exile also signifies for Oedipus deprivation of his rights as king. Access to onstage space designates sharing political authority, especially in this last part of the play where the term *polis* acquires a mainly political significance (in contrast to *chthon* (earth), designating the geographical aspect of the *polis*). The climax of the Exodos comes with Oedipus' and Antigone's planning of their future offstage, in Athens. The hardships of exile, a recurrent motif of the play, are here put forth by both characters, who leave the safety of the orchestra to the unknown offstage universe.

6 Final Thoughts

Phoenician Women is one of Euripides' most complex and intriguing plays. Tackling the events of a popular and frequently narrated mythical cycle, the play sets from the beginning great narrative expectations. The wideranging mythical span of the prologue signifies the poet's intention to provide a Theban mythical panorama. *Phoenician Women* constitute a megatext by itself, organizing associations of time, space, and intertext towards the greater goal of an all encompassing presentation of the Theban saga. Giving the fullest account of the myth amongst all other treatments, the *Phoenician Women* presents relations of causality and provides the spectators with enough information to answer questions regarding the beginnings of the destruction of the Labdacids, the causes of the familial clash, the different perceptions of justice, and the limits of revenge. In a characteristically Euripidean manner, the play provides more questions than answers, but this time, the spectators have exceptionally rich material to use for their own conclusions.

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FURTHER READING

The most recent editions of the *Phoenician Women* are Diggle (1994) and Mastronarde (1988). The text of Mastronarde (1988) appears with a simplified apparatus and corrections of minor

typographical errors in Mastronarde (1994), also enhanced with meticulous commentary. A new Loeb edition of the *Phoenician Women*, with excellent translation and introduction is Kovacs (2002). Craik (1988) and Amiech (2004) offer text, translation, and commentary. Recent monographs dedicated exclusively to the *Phoenician Women* are MuellerGoldingen (1985), Papadopoulou (2008), and Lamari (2010).

CHAPTER 19
Orestes

Elton Barker

Left her, wasn't coming in a hurry with the furies breathing down your neck.

It's the end of the world as we know it (REM)

At the terrifying climax to Aeschylus' *Choephoroi*, the matricidal Orestes suddenly returns to the stage pursued, as he puts it, by "hideous women looking like Gorgons dressed in black and thickly wreathed with snakes" (Aeschylus *Choephori* 1048). In his subsequent *Eumenides*, Aeschylus famously brings these Furies to life; but, at this earlier moment in the trilogy, it seems likely that they exist merely in Orestes' fevered imagination: in little more than ten lines he is fleeing the scene crying out to the Chorus of libation bearers, "you don't see these creatures, but I see them!" (Aeschylus *Choephori* 1061). Euripides takes this brief but bewildering dénouement and makes a play of it, the *Orestes* (Hall (1993) 266; Dunn (1996) 175; Debnar (2005) 19; Mastronade (2010) 84).

Euripides' *Orestes* begins with Electra situating the play within the context of the Atreid dynasty, tracing the story beyond Aeschylus all the way back to the original crime by the family's progenitor, Tantalus. Euripides also takes the story beyond Aeschylus in literary terms by setting it in the context of Menelaus' return home, as if this play were (also) a reworking of Homer's *Odyssey*, where the report of Orestes' matricide is first preserved and is on everybody's lips. Fittingly, the opening scenes of the play feature the golden couple from that epic, first Helen as she seeks assistance from Electra, then Menelaus who enters to express sympathy for Orestes' plight. Yet the focus remains fixed on Orestes, as he tries to defend his dreadful act in a pair of formal debates, aided and abetted by his customary supporters, his sister Electra and his longterm companion Pylades. Only as the play spirals towards its dizzying conclusion does the full extent of the collateral damage caused by extending the theme to Menelaus' return become apparent, as Helen appears to be killed, Hermione is taken hostage, and Menelaus (accompanied by guards) besieges the trio of misfits. Finally, with Orestes and company threatening to (literally) bring the house down from which so many evils have sprung, Apollo belatedly intervenes to set things straight.

There are enough plots, themes, and characters in this synopsis to fill several tragedies and the odd epic—as indeed they did. It comes as little surprise, then, that the play has generated widely varying responses (see Porter (1994) 1–44). From being one of the most popular tragedies in antiquity (Porter (1994) 1–4; cf. Arnott (1983) 13 with nn.1–7; West (1987) 28), critics of the nineteenth century condemned the play, in negative comparison to the Sophoclean tragic mean, for its chaotic nature and apparent inconsistency in characterization—something which also seems to have exercised Aristotle, who criticizes the character of Menelaus for being "unnecessarily" base (*Poetics* 1454a28–9; cf. 1461b19–21). The view of the play's unheroic treatment of the myth of Orestes has held sway ever since, whether as the basis of an

ironic reading of previous versions (e.g. Greenberg (1962); Wolff (1968); Rawson (1972); Zeitlin (2003)), as a challenge to theatrical convention more generally (e.g. Burnett (1971) 183–22; Arnott (1983)), or in the context of an Athenian crisis of identity in the death throes of the Peloponnesian War (e.g. Reinhardt (1960); Vellacott (1975); Euben (1986); Hall (1993)). Despite the criticism, scholars have also recognized the play's exciting and suspenseladen plot, its manipulation of audience expectation, and bold characterization (see most recently Willink (1986); West (1987); Hall (1993); Porter (1994); Wright (2008)).

These widely differing responses that the *Orestes* provokes derive in part at least from its striking contemporaneity (Easterling (1997) 33; Wright (2008) 81). For example, Euripides' choice to make a play out of the final scenes of Aeschylus' *Choephoroi*, when Orestes' tortured mind conjures up the Furies breathing down his neck, gives the dramatist the opportunity to deploy the latest "scientific" theories of the day and bring Orestes' furious madness up to date (Smith (1967); Theodorou (1993); cf. Verrall (1905); see also Dunn in this volume), which in turn helps to account for the critical use of psychoanalysis to interpret his behaviour (e.g. Conacher (1967) 213–24). Similarly, the messenger's report of the Argive debate is so detailed in its description of argument and counterargument that it appears to capture the hubbub of an actual Athenian *ekklēsia* (assembly), while even more specifically evoking the tense atmosphere of an Athens riven by factional infighting (e.g. Reinhardt (1960); Wolff (1968) 133; Rawson (1972) 160–2; Schein (1975) 60; VidalNaquet (1988) 334–5; Hall (1993) 266). Yet straightforwardly political readings of the assembly, which interpret the play as a document recording the crisis in Athens after the oligarchic revolution of 411 BCE, tend to underplay the heterogeneous resonance of tragic discourse (Pelling (2000); Wright (2008) 96–8, 118), including, in this case, the extent to which the assembly recalls prior *stage* events, namely Aeschylus' own trial of Orestes in the *Eumenides* and his quasidemocratic Argive assembly in the *Suppliants* (Barker (2011)). The topicality of the play is filtered through layer upon layer of past performances.

It is generally the case that tragedy thrives on this capacity to bring together the heroic and the contemporary in one place. In a similar way to epic before it, tragedy is able to accommodate on the same stage different kinds of civic discourses—the political, the personal, and the poetic—in its interrogation of the issues of the day, all the while avoiding the kind of direct reference to current affairs that would have restricted its appeal and limited its value. This double vision or heroic vagueness (Easterling (1985; 1997)) thus allows tragedy to resist being pinned down to any one time or place, and can help to explain its successful repackaging for and longevity in communities around the Hellenic world (Easterling (2005)). But, if tragedy commonly adopts a double vision towards events enacted on stage, then Euripides draws attention to the disjunction between these two perspectives precisely in order to implicate the audience deeper in the unfolding catastrophe. The *Orestes* is a classic example of this strategy in the ways in which it so blatantly advertises its indebtedness to—or, better, its cannibalization of—its tradition (on Euripides and myth, see further Wright in this volume). In what follows we shall see how Euripides exploits key formal elements of tragedy—the examples here focus on the prologue, the agōn, the messenger speech, and the *deus ex machina*—to bring the heroic and the contemporary into direct confrontation, with frequently unsettling

results for an audience who have grown up with the myths surrounding the house of Atreus. Indeed, each character to appear on Euripides' stage enters against the backdrop of previous articulations of their tradition (Zeitlin (2003) 312–14; Wright (2008) 79–83, 88), carrying with them, as it were, their personal effects and baggage of those past performances. The upshot of Euripides drawing on the audience's familiarity with tragedy is to draw them into it, using their knowledge to maximize their emotional and intellectual engagement in the events (cf. Heath (1987)). Some of the characters themselves even seem acutely aware of their role and how they've acted in the past, none more so than Orestes, who continually strives to live up to his Odyssean status as an untroubled, glorious (and resourceful) avenger, but who keeps finding himself slipping back into reenacting his role as the Oresteian matricide.

1 Electra and Helen Exchange Pleasantries, and Then . . .

It is his sister, Electra, who has the unenviable task of introducing us to the plot of this play. The monologue form, in which one of the characters involved (to varying degrees) in the events speaks directly to the audience, is a favorite of Euripides. While its expository nature may seem to eschew the muchvaunted realism that elsewhere characterizes his drama, the tactic allows the playwright not only to set up the events of the play speedily and economically, *but also* to frame them through the eyes of one his characters. This interest in focalization runs throughout the drama, and is one way in which Euripides makes viewing his tragedy more involving and complicated: over the course of this play there becomes no position from which one can gain a view of the events that remains impartial and untouched by them. For now, seeing the events of the play through Electra's eyes is essential for eliciting audience sympathy for Orestes from the beginning. And that's where Electra begins, from the beginning. She provides such an exhaustive account of her ancestral tree, tracing its roots all the way back to its distant origins and including almost every single branch and member, that it appears complete, exhaustive, *authoritative* (Roberts (2005) 141). It is as if Electra has heard the whole history of her family—on no fewer than three occasions she refers to what others have said (5, 8, 14)—and could relate it all given the time and if anxieties over her gender didn't prevent her (16, 26–7 respectively). Electra, the "family archivist" (Zeitlin (2003) 322), quickly reminds us that this is the tragic family to end all families.

The figure back to whom Electra traces the tragic origins of her house is Tantalus. But the punishment that she records for him oddly diverges from previous accounts in, say, Homer and Aeschylus: rather than being made to stand in a pool whose waters recede from his thirsting grasp, next to a tree whose branches pull back from his hungry reach, this Tantalus finds himself "suspended in the air [*aeri potãtai*], all the time in fear of the rock hanging above his head" (6–7). This image, unparalleled in the literary career of this character, is tantalizingly iconic for the play itself, as the family's troubles are raised beyond their immediate surroundings to a whole new cosmological level (Scodel (1984); Hall (1993) 265, 271–82; Wright (2008) 133–7). There remain echoes of a politicized drama in the style of Aeschylus' *Oresteia,* as Electra mentions that "Argos has decreed" (*edoxe d'Argei*, 46) that no one gives

them shelter, a form that echoes the resolutions of the Athenian demos. But, with all other indications of a polis environment notably absent (Easterling (1997) 32), even the vote that the city will take to decide their fate (49–50) comes across as a dramatic construct: compare, for example, the ritual rootedness of Aeschylus' dramas, the *Suppliants* and the *Choephoroi*, with which this play otherwise shares so much in terms of content and form. Instead, "it is myth and the mythical tradition (as such) that are under the microscope" (Wright (2008) 127).

The end of Electra's prologue demonstrates this point nicely: "Menelaus," Electra announces, "has returned home from Troy" (53). Agamemnon's two children have escaped from Aeschylus' *Choephoroi* and sought refuge in another tradition entirely, the *Odyssey* (Zeitlin (2003) 311; Willink (1986) xii–xiii), when Telemachus arrives in Sparta to receive hospitality from Menelaus and Helen—though it is not hospitality that Euripides' young hero seeks, but salvation (Parry (1969)). Right on cue, Helen enters (71). But Homeric soundings are soon drowned out by echoes of events much closer to home. First, Helen's entry anticipates, if not replaces entirely, the traditional choral parodos, in which Aeschylus would usually provide the kind of topographical setting that is so glaringly absent here. When Euripides' Chorus (of Argive maidens) do finally enter, at l.131, they do so at the behest of Electra "with a quiet step" (136) and a "gentle voice" (147–8: Arnott (1983) 21–2), in a reversal of the famous invocation scene in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, when Clytemnestra's ghost rouses the sleeping Chorus of Furies to action (Aeschylus *Eumenides* 94–139). If that scene could be read as Clytemnestra acting the dramatist by orchestrating the Furies' pursuit of Orestes, here (131–210) Electra attempts to do the opposite. By appealing to the Chorus to temper their customary opening song and dance, for fear of waking Orestes from his "peaceful slumber" (134–5), Electra hopes to defer the dreadful awakening of their troubles (161)—in essence this tragedy—for as long as possible. Second, Helen comes on stage out of a concern that Clytemnestra should receive proper burial rites. Helen's gesture towards observing correct ritual reprises her sister's role in the *Agamemnon* and the *Choephoroi* (e.g. Perrotta (1928); Greenberg (1962) 162; Burnett (1971) 199–200), though it remains only a gesture: Helen isn't looking to perform the rites herself but to find someone else to do it for her. Even from the beginning, then, the epic context is steeped in tragic (re)performance.

So it is that the general Odyssean atmosphere of conviviality and guestfriendship, as Electra and Helen exchange pleasantries, is doomed to be shortlived, though we might not have expected just how. For, as soon as Helen departs the scene, Electra turns round and announces: "Do you see how she cut off just the ends of her hair, sparing her beauty. She's the Helen of old!" (128–9). Such a sudden and unexpected volteface, in which a character entirely changes their tune as soon as their interlocutor has departed, is striking and almost unprecedented. I say *almost*: for we might recall the moment when Clytemnestra herself returns to the stage after having killed her husband. At that point she renounces all her previous actions and words as a deception (Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1371–98). The lies and playacting of the daughter of Tyndareus that Aeschylus spends a whole play to establish and exploit Euripides exposes in the space of a few lines. Thus the opening scene of the *Orestes* sets the pattern in which Euripides' characters discover faultlines in the Odyssean landscape opening up beneath them, shifting the ground upon which they tread.

2 Agonizing with Orestes

Electra has introduced the siblings' one hope to be Menelaus, and it is he who arrives next on stage, announcing to the "house" (356) both his pleasure at having arrived safely back from Troy and his sorrow that he should have done so under such circumstances. In a brief recollection of *Odyssey* book four, Menelaus recapitulates the story so far—the murder of his brother and the murder of Clytemnestra in turn—according to the different accounts that he has heard on his way home (366–7, 373–4). So far, so Odyssean. Now he wants to see for himself the nephew who has dared to exact such a terrible vengeance. Orestes duly approaches and appeals to his uncle for help.

The stage is set for a supplication, a favorite typescene of Euripidean tragedy for the way in which it can be manipulated for emotional or political effect. Here, Euripides extends and sharpens the play's opening sympathetic focus on his (long)suffering protagonist, by dramatizing a rapid exchange between Orestes and Menelaus of some sixty lines of stichomythia (385–448). Having ratcheted the tension up to almost breaking point, Euripides finally has Orestes make his supplication to his uncle (449–55).

Only his appeal goes unanswered. For Euripides, in a remarkable manipulation of the tragic form, suddenly introduces a third character, Tyndareus, Clytemnestra's father. Hardly a veteran of the theater—this is his one appearance in the whole of extant tragedy—his arrival abruptly alters the dynamics and radically disrupts the structure of the scene. Orestes anticipates the disruption when he makes a last, desperate appeal to Menelaus even as Tyndareus is walking on stage (459–69); as it is, he is sidelined from the proceedings for the next seventy lines (470–541) as Tyndareus assumes control over the space and the proceedings, directing his speech to Menelaus alone. In place of the expected supplication scene, Euripides introduces an *agōn* (Lloyd (1992) 113–29; Porter (1994) 99–172; cf. Barker (2009) 267–365)—a scene of formal debate between speeches of roughly equal length.

Responses to the agōn tend to express dismay either of Tyndareus' bitter persona and his arguments from expediency or of Orestes' protestations that by killing his mother he has performed a great public service and conformed to religious observance—and most often both (e.g. Schein (1975) 54–7; Euben (1986) 234–40). In particular, Orestes' sudden willingness to present the matricide as a glorious act from which all of Hellas has benefitted is often dismissed by critics as a sign of his insanity, for how else could such a claim be interpreted? Yet this is to misunderstand the process by which Euripides brings into collision contemporary lawcourt practice, with which the agōn resonates, and the mythical story on which his plot is based. As John Porter ((1994) 126) puts it:

> Euripides has taken the most famous court case in history—the trial that, since the production of the *Oresteia* in 458 (if not before), was firmly associated with the foundation of the Athenian homicide courts and a rational system of justice—and has recast it in the form of a contemporary trial.

Aeschylus' play, while providing a foundation narrative for the Areopagus, had only dimly recalled actual Athenian legislative procedure: it had studiously avoided, for example, the

lawcourt structure of twin adversarial set speeches (Sommerstein (1989) 16–17; cf. Pelling (2000) 165). By way of contrast, Euripides palpably advertises his agōn in the announcement that Tyndareus makes to Menelaus: "it's this man who's on *trial* (*agōn*) for folly (*asophias*)" (491; or, alternatively, "this is a contest of intelligence," reading *sophias* instead—even the terms of the debate are open to dispute). Moreover, by having one of his human characters formally initiate trial proceedings, Euripides removes the institutional sanction that had been granted the trial by Athena in the *Eumenides*. Instead, this agōn not only lacks Athena's divine hand guiding its establishment and outcome; it is set up by one of the adversaries—a figure who is invested in, and implicated by, the contest. It makes interpretation of the trial and its outcome all the more complicated as a result.

Further complications arise from the fact that the agōn's formal correspondence with the real life drama of the Athenian courts permeates through to the characterization of the two antagonists and the arguments that they use. Tyndareus' main concern seems to be that Orestes has not gone about things in a civilized way by killing his mother (496–506, 512–17, 523–5), by which he means to judge Orestes, not according to the traditional mythic material, but according to the standards of fifthcentury Athenian life, and in particular the interests and concerns of jurors performing their civic duty (see Johnstone (1999)). In this way Euripides transforms Aeschylus' literal representation of Furies into the more downtoearth, but no less *furious*, Tyndareus (Euben (1986) 239; Porter (1994) 142; Mastronade (2010) 84). For his part, Orestes acts out "his traditional role in the myth" (Lloyd (1992) 122) against this backdrop of Athenian civic life. In defence of matricide, for example, he voices a claim—that the man should have precedence over a woman—previously made in the trial scene from the *Eumenides* (Aeschylus *Eumenides* 658–61: see Willink (1986) 176; West (1987) 221; Lloyd (1992) 121; Porter (1994) 139–42). Where before that assertion had been uttered by no other than Apollo himself, this time around the god is conspicuously absent, leaving Orestes to repeat, as it were, the arguments that his character had heard back then; not surprisingly those same arguments sound far less convincing in the mouth of a mortal, particularly given the contemporary resonance of this retrial. But there is more at stake than Euripides cleverly and ironically subverting his predecessor's play: Orestes finds himself entangled in the complex web of fifthcentury Athenian litigation, which does not, nor cannot, accommodate his mythical behaviour. It is the audience's world that condemns Orestes, allowing sympathy to remain for him even as his arguments fail by the standards set by contemporary society.

Euripides, then, manipulates the dramatic form for *tragic* effect; that is, he uses the agōn as a means of involving his audience more fully, both emotionally and intellectually, in the events. Nowhere is this clearer than in his deferral of the supplication through the introduction of the agōn in the first place. The interruption of the supplication means that Menelaus' response to it remains unknown: although he expresses initial sympathy for his nephew (447), he has yet to swear support before Tyndareus' sudden arrival forestalls that revelation altogether. Indeed, Menelaus' position comes under particular scrutiny as the establishment of an agōn installs him as a quasijudge over the proceedings. (This is another scenario exploited frequently by Euripides, as evidenced by Agamemnon in *Hecuba*, Menelaus again in *Trojan Women*.) By a skillful manipulation of his three actors, Euripides triangulates conflict to draw into the

contested space both judge and judgement (see Barker (2009)).

Such considerations are evident once the agōn has concluded and Orestes, after having given a parting shot to his alreadydeparted opponent—an ample demonstration of his impotency if ever there was one—resumes his supplication. Attention now turns back to Menelaus, on whom the effects of this agōn are all too easily apparent (Porter (1994) 71–3, 103; contra Lloyd (1992) 113), as Menelaus circles about in clear agitation. Instead of the reassurance that Orestes craves, Menelaus issues a series of moral platitudes (Porter (1994) 71; cf. Menelaus again in Sophocles' *Ajax*, on which see Barker (2009) 297–302), which serves not only to characterize Menelaus as the very worst of villains (according to Aristotle) but also to taint, by association, the public rhetoric from which these generalities are drawn—the speeches that would have been heard day in and day out in the Athenian assembly and law courts (a point that may lay behind Aristotle's vociferous criticism of the man). When Menelaus finally vacates the stage, he does so without having committed himself to any decision, as Orestes is painfully aware.

With his main hope dashed, Orestes sees one last chance for salvation: he will follow Tyndareus to the assembly and fight his case there. Clearly signaling the displacement of contest on to this extradramatic institution, the assembly is established reusing the language of the agōn (at 846–8, 861, 877–8). But, for its dramatization, Euripides chooses a radically different form: the messenger speech, which allows the tragedian ample opportunity to display his rhetorical artistry (cf. *Medea*, *Hippolytus*, etc.). Indeed, a messenger's report of an assembly has few precedents in tragedy (cf. Euripides *Hecuba* 107–140). The much briefer account of an Argive assembly in Aeschylus' *Suppliants* had depicted a rather one dimensional report of the demos' support for their king; by contrast Euripides depicts an assembly with no fewer than five speakers, each presenting a distinctive point of view, in imitation of the cutandthrust of a reallife debate. As we noted above, the report's vividness has encouraged scholars to identify the scene with Athens. And yet Euripides is careful to avoid specific Athenian democratic terminology or any direct associations with the speakers of his day; the fact that only "halfechoes" of contemporary practice can be heard tells against repeated attempts to read the scene simply through Athenian eyes. In fact it could be said that the representation exposes an issue potentially disruptive of public debate in general, such as when more evenhanded arguments get swept up and away by statements of ever more extreme views (Pelling (2000) 165–7).

The tendency to read the Argive assembly as some kind of statement on current Athenian politics is even more problematic given the blurring of its texture with prior theatrical manifestations of debate. Foremost among these, as has already been mentioned, are the two tragedies by Aeschylus, the *Eumenides*, in which Orestes is put on trial in the Areopagus, and the *Suppliants*, in which a messenger reports on the Argive demos' decision to support the king in his defense of the suppliants. In the *Eumenides*, Aeschylus portrays Athena's decision to set up a law court to decide on Orestes' fate as *a foundational act*: her undertaking institutionalizes democratic trial procedure in Athens for the Athenians (Aeschylus *Eumenides* 681–710). Euripides also connects his trial scene to the foundation of a law court, but, crucially, his has *already* been established (871–4):

I saw a crowd going to take their seats on a hill,

where they say Danaus, giving judgement to Aegyptus,

first gathered the people and sat them in common.

With this frame to his "trial" of Orestes, Euripides not only divorces the act of institutionalization from its dramatic reenactment, and from the prime mover of events on stage to a figure from the distant past (none other than Danaus, the primary mediating force in Aeschylus' *Suppliants*); significantly, far from establishing a context in which similar cases may be judged, Euripides removes the comfort of a socially legitimized space in which decisions can be made and dissent managed (Debnar (2005) 20; Barker (2011)). Now, with both the onstage and offstage agōn failing to provide an adequate solution to his crisis, Orestes is forced to pursue his case outside the institutional framework; now there is no Athena to step in as moderator when one party fails to gain what they consider to be their just desserts (as happens in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*). Yet still more uncomfortable for an audience is the position that they are invited to adopt in this crisis: if they find it in themselves to absolve Orestes of his crime, which would be in keeping with both the tradition and the sympathetic focus of the play, that conclusion would put them squarely at odds with the institutional judgement performed by the offstage citizen body of Argos.

That Euripides manages to reproduce equivocation over judging Orestes is due, in part at least, to his borrowing a strategy from Aeschylus' *Suppliants*: the messenger speech. Unlike Aeschylus' dramatization of Orestes' trial, Euripides embeds the trial within a report and part of someone's brief. The view of the public assembly is filtered through the eyes of another, and that other is an interested party, a supporter of Orestes, who would even crown the matricide with a garland for his "victory" (Easterling (1997) 30–1)—a judgement few would endorse, however kindly one might feel towards him. By representing the assembly through the eyes of such a partisan figure, Euripides makes the audience responsible for judging the status of the report, which in turn involves them in coming to judgement on Orestes, even as that focalization ensures the sympathetic focus remains resolutely fixed on the protagonist's suffering.

It is not only previous tragedy through which the contemporary elements of this debate are refracted: the assembly also resounds to the language, themes, and characters of Homeric epic. Most obviously a number of the speakers—the herald and Diomedes chief among them, but also the Thersiteslike demagogue—could have stepped straight out of the *Iliad*. But there are subtler touches too, such as the language with which the messenger describes the assembly that evokes the worlds of Athens and Homeric epic simultaneously (Willink (1986) 231). More precisely, the portrait of debate engages directly with the *Odyssey*'s depiction of the assembly on Ithaca (Lloyd (1992) 126), particularly in its opening question, "Has some message from enemies set the city of Danaus' sons aflutter?" (875–6), which recalls Aegyptios' similarly speculative, "Has someone heard a message about an army coming?" (Homer *Odyssey* 2.30). There, like here, the fate of the young hero lies in the balance. There, like here, the young hero is forced to pursue another route to exact justice against his enemies outside the institution of

assembly. Unlike Telemachus, however, Orestes enjoys far less success in achieving his aims and maintaining audience sympathies. His is a tragic tale, not an epic homecoming.

3 More Plotting, Helen Killed (?), Hermione Taken Hostage, the Friends Encircled, the House of Atreus Set on Fire, Apollo Intervenes

In response to his friend's disappointments in the agōn and the assembly, two institutions in which Orestes ought to have (and has previously) found absolution, the usually silent Pylades speaks up (Burnett (1971) 189, 214–15; Dunn (1996) 166–7; Wright (2008) 43; Mastronade (2010) 85). Now taking the lead he establishes the *present drama itself* as the only viable stage on which they might find justice: in effect, the characters' final hope now lies in their willingness and capacity to devise a *new* plot—to make up the story as they go along, as it were. Accordingly, it is from this point that the play's departure from its traditional storylines is most acutely felt. To accompany this move, the plotting, just as the assembly had done before it, quickly accrues the language of the agōn: "How then do we *fight* [*agōnioumetha*] our *fight* [*agōna*]?," (1124) Orestes asks his friend, before exhorting them to arm "for their final *battle* [*agōn*]" (1222–3); Pylades in turn anticipates how the "three kinsmen face one *trial* [*agōn*] and one judgement" (1244); for her part, Electra instructs the Chorus to keep a closer watch since "this isn't a *test* [*agōn*] of sitting around" (1291), and persuades Hermione to "come to the *contest* [*agōna*] here" (1342). Tellingly, however, the Chorus have the final word, when they express anxiety that the House is in danger of falling into "another fearful trial [*agōn*]" (1537–8). Even as the progatonists try to break free from their history and come up with a tale to rival any predecessor, there is no escaping the house of horrors. The *Orestes* is the most agonizing (viz. competitive, *troubling*) of plays.

The final frenzy of plotting threatens to challenge even the integrity of the mythical tradition itself. In a remarkable scene, a Phrygian slave provides a lyrical account of Helen's fate (1368–1502), who appears to have just been killed offstage (1302; Willink (1986) xxxvi). This is Euripides pulling out all the stops (Wolff (1968) 139; Burnett (1971) 191; Arnott (1982) 41–3; Wright (2008) 45): a lyric passage for a foreign character has no precedent in tragedy, while the tragic fantasy of killing Helen and ridding Greece of this bane, once and for all, appears to have been fulfilled (Wright (2008) 81–3, 101; cf. Arnott (1983) 25–8). Perhaps most significantly, however, is the radical break in perspective. Until now, the sympathetic focus has been insistently and unrelentingly on Orestes, from Electra's opening monologue, through the interrupted supplication scene with Menelaus, to the messenger report of the assembly. Now, as the play careers towards its unheralded frantic conclusion, we are presented with an alternative viewpoint, not only that of a foreigner, but one whose loyalties lie with the hated Helen. Like the innovations introduced to painting by Cezanne, whose stilllife bowl of fruit presents radically differing perspectives superimposed on each other, Euripides' tragedy dramatizes different, even competing, focal points, which taken together seem to contradict each other and are even harder for an audience to reconcile.

Such has been the difficulty that many critics have either dismissed this ending as farce or else condemned Orestes and his friends in strongly moralistic overtones, as if they represent the corruption of a heroic ethos. (Those critics crying out "O tempora, o mores" include: Arrowsmith (1963) 45–6; Wolff (1968) 147–9; Burnett (1971) 226; Rawson (1972); Dunn (1996) 158–79; cf. Porter (1994) 254–68). And it *is* true that the audience's loyalties are being sorely tested by the actions of the young companions, particularly when they kidnap the blameless Hermione. But to label this ending as a denunciation of the grim contemporary reality (e.g. Reinhardt (1960); Hall (1993)) not only overlooks the readiness on the part of the audience to respond positively to the survival instincts, resourcefulness and cunning shown by the siblings (Pelling (2000) 166–7); it also, once again, ignores the double focus of tragedy. For the plotting, the desire to exact justice, the use of deception, above all the resourcefulness, ingenuity, and endurance all recall the *Odyssey* (Zeitlin (2003) 323–5; Porter (1994) 81, 95). In that epic, of course, it was Orestes who is specifically and insistently presented as the positive role model for Telemachus to emulate. It is, then, with some irony that Euripides' Orestes "looks to Ithaca for a positive reenactment of his original Odyssean role in Argos" (Zeitlin (2003) 325).

But he fails: this is after all a tragedy, albeit one of epic proportions. As hard as Orestes and his friends might try to taleblaze in the Odyssean mode, they cannot escape reciting their scripted lines; time and again, as they try to plot their escape, they are condemned to (re)enact their tragic roles. To take just the most obvious pair of examples: like mother, like daughter, Orestes' picture of his sister as "thinking like a man" (*tas phrenas arsenas*, *Orestes* 1204) clearly references Aeschylus' "manthinking" (*androboulon*) Clytemnestra (Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 11); while Electra's description of the vote against them as a yoke of necessity (*anagkēs d' es zugon*, *Orestes* 1330) echoes the Chorus' attempt to make sense of Agamemnon's decision to sacrifice his daughter (*epei d' anagkas edu lepadnon*, Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 218: Burnett (1971) 192, 209–11; Rawson (1972) 155–6; Zeitlin (2003) 320–1). The strongest indication of a tragic realignment of values comes when, with Orestes and Pylades going within to kill Helen, Electra stands outside and interacts with the Chorus (1246–1312) in a scene that brings to mind Sophocles' version of the matricide (Sophocles *Electra* 1398–1421, on which see Greenberg (1962); Wolff (1968) 132; and especially Goldhill (2003)). "Once he is in Argos, an Orestes, like a broken record, can perform one action and one action only, namely, he can kill mothers or mother surrogates and wives who are adulterous," writes Froma Zeitlin (2003) 328–9. In the end Orestes and company find themselves physically encircled by Menelaus and the guards, just as their roles have been figuratively encircled by resonances of prior versions. Their only recourse is to try to set fire to the damned house that gave birth to them and to hell with all these stories.

But it is not only the characters who find themselves encircled at the end of the play and forced to confront the whys and wherefores of the plotting; the audience too find themselves fenced in by the tradition and confronted by the question, "well, just how would you break the cycle of violence?" Euripides leaves his audience with this problem by bringing his play to an abrupt artificial close through divine intervention: using the *deus ex machina* (god from the machine), Euripides brings in the longabsent Apollo to (belatedly) intervene to "put the affairs of the

city straight" (1664). Some critics have heard in those words an appeal to an audience still caught up in the cataclysm of the oligarchic revolution of 411 BCE and its fallout (Hall (1993) 264, 283). That may be true; but they echo too the last words uttered by Zeus who (along with Athena) similarly brings the *Odyssey*'s exploration into civil conflict artificially to an end (Homer *Odyssey* 24.478–86). Once again contemporary and traditional discourses, attitudes and ideas intersect and intertwine. At one level this tension is acted out by the characters themselves, as Euripides' Orestes tries to return to the (relatively) unambiguously positive portrayal that he once enjoyed in epic, by acting out an "Odysseuslike" adventure. But at another level it disrupts the audience's complacency that they are just watching a play. Even Apollo's Zeuslike intervention at the end can do little to dispel the impression that things have got seriously out of hand, no matter where our sympathies lie.

4 A Tragedy for All Ages

A final thought *The Orestes* comes across as one of the most directly political of all of Euripides' plays, both by being so closely modeled on the Aeschylean foundation myth(s) of democratic decisionmaking (in the *Eumenides* and *Suppliants*), and by its interrogation of the agōn in the form of the onstage trial and offstage assembly. It is, as Easterling ((1997) 29) remarks, "a play about a community's decisionmaking." The theme bleeds into the very fabric of the mythical tapestry from which the play is spun to the extent that the community left to make the decisions are us.

And yet, as Easterling also observes, curiously absent from the play are any of the conventional markers of location that not only serve to provide a backdrop to the events but frequently endow tragic action with its significance—think, for example, of Aeschylus' spectacular change of scene at the beginning of the *Eumenides*, where Delphi's incapacity to cleanse Orestes of his pollution means that he must take his case to Athens. Such topographical anonymity renders the events of *Orestes* easier to apply paradigmatically to any time, any place, anywhere. In its replacement is the sense of a play knowingly situated in its mythical landscape, leading to "a different kind of 'audience solidarity', the sense of a shared cultural identity" (Easterling (1997) 33). This is a play whose anatomization of civic breakdown and interrogation of the inability or unwillingness of participants to break the cycle of violence have relevance beyond Athens, through the broader Hellenic world, to our own.

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FURTHER READING

One of Euripides' less wellstudied plays, the *Orestes* has recently attracted a small but significant flurry of interest from scholars rooting through Euripides' backcatalogue. The best single treatment of the play is by Porter (1994), whose monograph provides an indepth study of the agōn and the Phrygian messenger scene; he also helpfully documents in some detail the scholarly reception of the play. Like London buses, two commentaries on the play arrived at more or less the same time after a lengthy wait, those by Willink (1986) and West (1987), both of which excel in their contextualization, textual analysis, and marginalia. On the play's special effects Arnott (1983) is still an invaluable resource. Though Hall (1993) is an entertaining read and presents a convincing case for the play's cosmological pretensions, Pelling (2000) provides the most nuanced account of the *Orestes*' politics. Zeitlin (2003, originally published 1980)'s rummage through the play's wardrobe reveals a number of its undergarments and remains one of the most thoughtprovoking studies in Euripidean tragic criticism to have emerged in recent times. Wright (2008)'s new studentfriendly introduction is well conceived, and offers a welcome survey of modern stage productions.

Additional bibliographical note: since writing this article, Isabelle Torrance has published *Metapoetry in Euripides* (Oxford, 2013), whose first chapter explores Euripides' sustained intertextual engagement with Aeschylus' *Oresteia* that runs through his *Electra*, *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, and *Orestes* (see further Torrance in this volume). Reading the structure of *Orestes* "as a series of reversed *Oresteia* plots" (46) Torrance comes to a similar conclusion as one point made in this brief study: namely, that, by drawing attention to his play's innovations, Euripides invites "the audience to consider the difficulties the tragic poet faces in composing new drama while, by necessity, following in the footsteps of great predecessors" (62).

CHAPTER 20
Iphigenia at Aulis

Isabelle Torrance

Iphigenia at Aulis is Euripides' last play. It seems to have been left unfinished at his death but was produced posthumously in 405 BCE, along with *Bacchae* and the lost *Alcmaeon in Corinth*. Although very different, *Iphigenia at Aulis* and *Bacchae* share several common concerns. Both explore the horrors of filicide (Iphigenia sacrificed by her father, Pentheus murdered by his unwitting mother), and the apparently mutually exclusive interests of families and communities. Both plays end with family tragedies and simultaneous community successes, and both plays exploit the language of religious ritual to signal destruction. *Alcmaeon in Corinth*, from what we can tell, also engaged with the breakdown of family structures, but ended positively (Michelakis (2006) 87). This chapter first makes a brief note on the text of the play, and then gives a summary of the mythological background and main action of *Iphigenia at Aulis*, noting where Euripides has departed from or engaged with earlier poetic treatments of the episode, and also drawing attention briefly to some issues of sociological or thematic importance—oath and supplication rituals, the duplicitous language of sacrifice, the connection between name and body, the power of *erōs*. This summary of events informs the overview of the drama's main characters and a discussion of Aristotle's criticism of the changes of mind in this play. The Chorus is analyzed both as a collective character and through the impact of their songs on the themes of the drama. The play's major themes of marriage and sacrifice, and war, politics, and slavery are discussed in two separate sections. The final section addresses some aspects of selfconsciousness in the composition of the drama. There has not been space here to address the extremely rich reception history of *Iphigenia at Aulis*, but references on this topic are given in Further Reading.

Note on the text of the play: Our discussion of *Iphigenia at Aulis* is based on the entire manuscript as it has been transmitted, since this is what is normally produced in accessible translations. It is important to acknowledge, however, that significant portions of the drama are suspected by textual scholars of having been added or rewritten after Euripides' death. We have space here to observe only briefly the most significant of these textual problems. The drama was produced by Euripides' son (or nephew), and it is possible that he completed a draft which was left unfinished at Euripides' death. The drama seems to have two prologues. The first (1–48) is unusual in that it features an active conspiracy between two characters. The second (49–162) is far more typical of Euripides in presenting a character who gives a genealogical and mythological history of events leading up to the present situation (esp. 49–105). The first prologue may have been a Euripidean experiment, but it may also have been a posthumous addition. There are lines scattered throughout the play which may have been interpolated by actors over the course of the fourth century and beyond. Most importantly, the transmitted ending (1578–1629) where the messenger reports Iphigenia's miraculous escape displays so many anomalies in meter and diction that it is generally considered to have been

written or revised in the early Byzantine period (West (1981) 73–6). If Iphigenia does not escape from the sacrifice, the play has a far more sinister conclusion. For more details, see recommendations in Further Reading at the end of this chapter.

1 Plot

Iphigenia at Aulis dramatizes events leading up to the human sacrifice of Iphigenia, daughter of the Greek commander Agamemnon, to Artemis, patron goddess of the young and the hunt. Gathered at the bay of Aulis to set sail against Troy, the Greek fleet is detained by unfavorable weather (88). As the army's frustrations grow, their prophet Calchas declares that the fleet will be unable to sail until Agamemnon sacrifices Iphigenia to Artemis (89–93). In other versions, Artemis becomes angry with Agamemnon and demands the sacrifice either because he is fated to destroy the Troy's young (Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 104–227), or because he boasted after killing a stag in Artemis' sacred grove (Sophocles *Electra* 563–76). In Euripides' *Iphigenia among the Taurians* (15–24) Agamemnon had vowed to sacrifice to Artemis the finest thing the year would bear, which Calchas judged to be Iphigenia. In *Iphigenia at Aulis*, however, no clear reason is given for the demand. Calchas is presented as being politically ambitious, in league with the rabblerouser Odysseus, and is accused of making false prophecies (518–21, 525–8, 956–8).

The expedition of the Greeks against Troy had been prompted by the adulterous liaison of Helen, wife of the Spartan king Menelaus (Agamemnon's brother), with the Trojan prince Paris. Although Paris had been exposed at birth after an omen revealed to his mother that he would bring ruin to the Trojans, he survived, was raised by cowherders, and eventually returned to Troy where his identity was revealed (as dramatized in Euripides' fragmentary *Alexandros*). In the famous "Judgment of Paris" he was asked to judge a beauty contest between the goddesses Athena, Hera, and Aphrodite, who had quarreled after the interventions of Eris (the personification of Strife), as we hear in the play (178–84). Each goddess offers Paris a reward but he chooses Aphrodite who had promised him Helen, famed for her beauty, and with whom Paris elopes to Troy. Eager to retrieve his wife, Menelaus called on all the Greek kings who had competed for her hand to fulfill their oaths and come to his aid. It was with foresight of such an event that Helen's mortal father Tyndareus had exacted oaths from all her suitors in which they swore that they would support whoever won her hand. The oath is mentioned several times in the play (58–65, 78, 391, 395) and shows that the Greek leaders are bound by divinelysanctioned covenant to fight for Menelaus, all except for Achilles, who was not one of Helen's suitors (Hediod, *Catalogue of Women* fr. 204.87–93, Merkelbach and West, translated in Most (2007) as fr. 155).

The drama begins with Agamemnon anxiously writing and rewriting a letter. He has already sent a letter home to his wife Clytemnestra to lure his daughter to Aulis with the false promise that she is to be married to Achilles. The ruse was a traditional part of this mythic episode, but using a written text for effecting the communication is a Euripidean innovation, as is the presentation of Agamemnon trying to abandon the ruse. He has regretted sending the first message and the letter we see him write on stage tells Clytemnestra not to come. He dispatches

a loyal servant with the new letter but the man is apprehended by Menelaus who angrily rips open the letter and argues with Agamemnon over the future of the expedition and his position as its leader. Agamemnon, says Menelaus, had been desperate to gain command of the army and was willing, even glad, to agree to the sacrifice of his daughter so that the ships could set sail (358–62). Agamemnon responds that he refuses to kill his children so that Menelaus can retrieve a worthless wife (382–99). Menelaus accuses Agamemnon of betraying his brother (412) just as a messenger enters announcing the arrival of Clytemnestra, Iphigenia, and Agamemnon's infant son Orestes, and describing the stir it has caused among the curious soldiers (414–34).

The drama plays with the idea that Iphigenia's sacrifice and the expedition to Troy could be abandoned (94–6, 352–3), although this would have been mythologically impossible. Agamemnon's argument that Helen's suitors (of which he was one) swore their oaths "by the foolishness of their wits" and in a manner which was not binding (391–6) would not have been compelling to a Greek audience for whom formal oaths were completely binding (Sommerstein and Torrance (2014) 281–94). When Agamemnon realizes that his wife and daughter have arrived, however, his demeanor changes. "What a yoke of necessity I have been placed under!" he exclaims (443) evoking a famous image used by Aeschylus to describe the lack of choice Agamemnon had in his version of the sacrifice (*Agamemnon* 218). The line signals Agamemnon's change of mind. Where he had first seemed to exercise a freedom of choice, he now conforms to poetic tradition with resignation (cf. Sorum (1992) 537). At the same time, Menelaus also undergoes an abrupt change of mind. He begins his speech with an oath, swearing by his forefathers that he will speak clearly and without duplicity (473–6). The oath is important for convincing an audience of the sincerity behind Menelaus' unexpected about turn. He recants his former aggression and it is now he who suggests abandoning the expedition (495), but Agamemnon remains unshakeable in his belief that he is now constrained by necessity to sacrifice his daughter (511–12), anticipating being attacked by the mob of the Greek army if he does not (513–37).

Clytemnestra's arrival at Agamemnon's tent with Iphigenia and Orestes is a scene riddled with dramatic irony, playing on Iphigenia's childlike adoration for her father (e.g. 638–9, 648, 653) intertwined with his grimly duplicitous allusions to her sacrifice which develop in intensity and culminate in his statements that he must perform a sacrifice with Iphigenia standing near the sacred water (673–5). The oblivious Clytemnestra, keen to secure a good future for her daughter, makes appropriate enquires about Achilles and his heritage (695–716). She has come to Aulis in obedience to Agamemnon (633–4) but she refuses to obey his order to leave, and insists that she must fulfill her duty (as mother) to hold the marriagetorches for her daughter's wedding celebration (730–41). The presence of Clytemnestra in the army camp may have been a Euripidean innovation. Her appearance at Aulis is not mentioned in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, nor in Sophocles' *Electra*. The degradation of Agamemnon's character in *Iphigenia at Aulis* is developed at the end of the scene when he decides to join forces with Calchas (742–8), the prophet whom he had earlier denounced as overly ambitious and evil (520).

It is during Agamemnon's absence that his grotesque plans are discovered. Achilles arrives on business and is greeted by Clytemnestra as her future soninlaw. It is likely that Achilles'

lack of awareness of the ruse which implicates him is another Euripidean innovation (Michelakis (2002) 84–5). Achilles has no idea what Clytemnestra is talking about, is horrified by her approaches, much to her embarrassment, and is on the point of leaving when the loyal servant from the opening scene reappears. The servant's first allegiance is to Clytemnestra (46–8, 114), and he reveals the awful truth. Both Achilles and Clytemnestra are appalled. Clytemnestra begs Achilles for aid, abasing herself in a ritual supplication. This gesture, in which the suppliant would kneel before the object of their supplication holding a hand up to the chin or clasping their right hand (cf. 900–1, 909), was considered by Greeks to have the divine protection of Zeus (Naiden (2006) esp. 29–104). Achilles does not hesitate in agreeing to assist the women. He claims that if his name (*onoma*) causes Iphigenia's death, his body (*sōma*) will no longer be pure (93–40). This perceived interdependence of name and body is thematically important, as in other Euripidean dramas (on which see Wright (2005) 310–16). While the physicality of Iphigenia's body is stressed (1216–17, 1395–7; cf. 1340), Iphigenia confuses body and name when she believes, as she leaves for her sacrifice, that the army is keen for battle because of her *name* (1494–5). Achilles is also confused about the relationship between his name and his body. The Myrmidons in *Iphigenia at Aulis* may threaten to stone Achilles' body (*sōma*; 1350–2) but the Chorus have earlier referred to the prophecy of Achilles' tutor, the wise centaur Chiron, that Achilles will sail for Troy with his body (*sōma*) enveloped in the golden armour forged by Hephaestus (1062–75). The body of Achilles is thus fated to remain unharmed by the abuse of his name.

Achilles vows to protect Iphigenia at the end of his speech (970–4) but first admits that he would willingly have agreed to Agamemnon's plan if he had been asked, and if the expedition required it (959–69). This detail often surprises modern audiences, but when Agamemnon uses Achilles' name without his permission he displays the same kind of antagonistic behavior towards Achilles as does Agamemnon in the first book of the *Iliad* when he takes Achilles' prize from him without seeking permission. Nevertheless, the true reason for Achilles' anger highlights the pathos of the women's situation. Their only defender comes to their aid not because he believes that Iphigenia should be saved on principle, but because he has been implicated in a ruse without his consent. This seems to be implicitly acknowledged by Clytemnestra when she praises the beginning and end of Achilles' speech, but not the middle (990), while in the very next scene, she draws attention to the multiple woes, caused by Agamemnon, any of which could serve as the beginning, middle, or end of her speech (1125–6).

Clytemnestra and Iphigenia both attempt to persuade Agamemnon to abandon the sacrifice. Clytemnestra's speech contains the startling revelation that Agamemnon had married her by force, killing her first husband and their infant child, whom he tore from her breast and hurled to the ground (1149–52). The point may have been further impressed on the audience in performance if Iphigenia stood silently holding the infant Orestes during Clytemnestra's speech evoking the image of a young mother with an infant at her breast, as Gibert has suggested (Gibert (2005) 239–40).The play is our earliest source for this version of events, and it seems to have been invented by Euripides. It casts Agamemnon as a violent childmurderer who is effectively repeating a known pattern of behavior in murdering a child (Griffin (1990) 146). It

also underlines Clytemnestra's tolerance in becoming an obedient wife to Agamemnon after being subdued by his aggression. That she is beyond reproach as a wife is something she emphasizes (1157–65). She has even produced a son, Orestes. Iphigenia urges her brother to weep with her as she supplicates Agamemnon stressing their father–daughter bond (1211–52). Agamemnon claims that the army will kill his family unless he goes through with the sacrifice (1267–8) and again conforms to the paradigm of Aeschylus when he says it is both terrible to endure the deed and terrible not to (1257–8; compare *Agamemnon* 206–7; cf. Gibert (1995) 222).

When Achilles returns to defend Iphigenia, it is with news that the whole army has turned against him, even his own men, the Myrmidons (1341–67). Clytemnestra despairs that Iphigenia will be dragged off against her will (1365), but Iphigenia suddenly reveals that she has decided to go willingly to her death thus gaining fame for herself and freedom for Greece (1383–4, 1398–9). Presenting Iphigenia as a willing sacrificial victim is one of Euripides' major innovations. Achilles praises her decision but promises to come to her defense at the altar, should she change her mind (again! 1424–32). Iphigenia tries vainly to console her mother. When Clytemnestra says that Agamemnon must "run dread contests [*agōnes*]" because of Iphigenia (1455), we are reminded that he will be murdered by his wife on his return from Troy in a "contest" (*agōn*) arising from a longstanding grievance (i.e. the sacrifice of Iphigenia; Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1377–8). The passion (*erōs*) that causes this murder is linked by Michelini to the multivalent functions of passion (*erōs*) in the drama—as the stuff of legend, as the cause of strife, and as a sentimental ideal (Michelini (2000) 51–4). In the final scene (which was probably not part of the Euripidean original) the messenger reports that Iphigenia disappeared from the altar and "flew off" into heaven while a hind appeared in her place (1578–1629). This ending implies a connection with Euripides' *Iphigenia among the Taurians* where Iphigenia is carried through the air by Artemis to a barbarian land, though in that play all the Greeks believe that she is dead. In *Iphigenia at Aulis*, Clytemnestra rejects the story of apotheosis as a vain fiction (1617–18).

2 Characters and Changes of Mind

The play casts Clytemnestra as a good wife and mother who is terribly wronged in several ways by Agamemnon. She may have disobeyed his order to leave Aulis, but this is only because of her concern that appropriate traditions be maintained in her daughter's marriage. Her experiences can be read as psychological motivations for the horrendous murder of her husband and his concubine on their return from Troy (as famously dramatized in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*). Agamemnon is an indecisive and weakwilled character. Although he initially rejects the notion of sacrificing Iphigenia (94–6), he is (by his own admission) persuaded to lure her to Aulis for this very purpose (97–105), and although he tries to avert her arrival, he quickly adopts a defeatist attitude towards the sacrifice once his second letter has been intercepted. He laments the difficulties of his position, but the old servant disapproves of his selfpity (28–34), and Menelaus claims that it was a position Agamemnon desperately sought out (337–45), an accusation that Agamemnon does not address. It is through resignation rather

than active decision that he settles upon the sacrifice as his only option, an attitude which is challenged by Menelaus' suggestion that they could still go home (495). Nevertheless, Agamemnon is right to suspect Odysseus of rousing the mob and he is correct in his prediction that his family (certainly Iphigenia) will be killed if he does not go through with the sacrifice (513–37, 1338–68).

Agamemnon and Menelaus are often treated as a unit, "the sons of Atreus" (e.g. Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 123). In *Iphigenia at Aulis*, they share command of the Mycenaean ships (268–9). They may be oppositeminded but they are also interdependent. Menelaus is first characterized by violence and aggression (311, 315, 319) but his realization that the horrors to be caused for the sake of his evil wife could and should be avoided (479–503) marks a seemingly unprecedented selflessness in a dramatic portrayal of Menelaus. Throughout tragedy, Menelaus is generally an unpleasant character. Aristotle twice singles out Menelaus in Euripides' *Orestes* as an example of unnecessary evil (*Poetics* 1454a28–9, 1461b21). In *Iphigenia at Aulis* Achilles equates being the worst man among the Argives with being "a Menelaus among men" (944–5) and we can say that, like Agamemnon, Menelaus seems indecisive and weakwilled. He berates Agamemnon, saying that a good man should not change his attitude but should be most supportive of his friends when he is faring well (345–7). This seems to be completely at odds with Menelaus' own subsequent change of attitude. There may perhaps be some room for maneuver in the interpretation of the phrase "when he is faring well" (346), but Menelaus' reversal of opinion casts him as unreliable, at least, if not quite as base as Achilles suggests.

The individuality of Achilles as a character and his isolation from the rest of the army speak to his traditional Homeric pedigree as an independent warrior who will not bow to the will of the Greek commanders if he feels he has been mistreated. Unlike the Homeric Achilles, however, Achilles in *Iphigenia at Aulis* is unable to affect the fortunes of the army by his individual actions, and Michelakis has shown how the play presents him as an adolescent who has not yet matured into the hero he is fated to become (Michelakis (2002) 84–143). Achilles' praise of Iphigenia feeds into her belief that she is dying a noble death and will achieve great fame. We first meet her as a childlike character but she matures enough by the end of the drama to create a choice for herself (Luschnig (1988) 126). The pathos of her situation remains, however, since her freedom to choose is essentially illusory (Rabinowitz (1993) 47) and she will not be remembered in Greek mythology as a heroine of the Trojan war. When Iphigenia uses a unique coinage from Aeschylus to claim that she will be "the citysacker" (*heleptolis*) of the Trojans (1476) we are reminded that it is not Iphigenia who will be remembered positively as the "citysacker", rather *Hele*n will blamed as *heleptolis* ("the citysacker" (*Agamemnon* 688; cf. Luschnig (1988) 127, Gibert (1995) 252), and the entire expedition's claim to glory will be brought into question by the impious behavior of the Greeks at Troy.

Aristotle famously criticized the character of Iphigenia as an example of intolerable inconsistency because she first pleads desperately for her life to be saved and later gives it up willingly (*Poetics* 1454a31–3). He might equally well have criticized Menelaus (or Agamemnon) for radical changes of mind. John Gibert has discussed in detail the various scholarly attitudes to Aristotle's criticism (Gibert (1995) 203–54). As Gibert demonstrates,

the most compelling arguments for making sense of these issues are to be found in moving beyond Aristotle and in examining the characters' changes of mind in the context of the drama as a whole, and in terms of mythological tradition. Agamemnon's changes of mind are essentially an extended development of the poetic tradition in which Calchas' prophecy puts him in an impossible position, forced to choose (within a martial context) between military and parental responsibilities. Menelaus' change of mind serves several important functions. It reminds us of the futility of this war, fought over a worthless wife (see further Luschnig (1988) 37–55). It reinstigates a dramatic tension surrounding the play's outcome, and it serves as a model for illustrating how a person can come to a complete reversal of opinion. This sets the scene for Iphigenia's own change of mind which is comprehensible also in terms of the mythological tradition which she cannot escape. In her decision to die freely, she appropriates important themes by casting her sacrifice as her marriage and her glory (1399).

3 Chorus

The Chorus in *Iphigenia at Aulis* is made up of young married women (176, 615, 1467, 1491), who have come to visit Aulis from the town of Calchis across the bay (164–8). (For the Chorus in Euripides, see the discussion of Murnaghan in this volume.) They are tourists on a sightseeing trip. Their opening song describes the assembled warriors on the beach in a dazzling vision of masculine glamour, eroticized by the Chorus' embarrassment as they run through the grove of Artemis (185–91). Froma Zeitlin has discussed how the description evokes a painted scene, reminding us of the biographical tradition according to which Euripides had trained as a painter (Zeitlin (1994) 157–71). The two Ajaxes are sitting together (192–4), Protesilaus and Palamedes are playing draughts (194–8), Diomedes is throwing a discus (199–200). The longest description is given to Achilles who runs along the beach in his armor in competition with a horsedrawn chariot (206–30). The horses have bridles crafted in gold (219) and hair like fire (225). The ships of the Greek warriors are similarly spectacular and evoke the Homeric catalog of ships in a metapoetic manner (Torrance (2013) 82–93). Those of Achilles have golden images of the daughters of Nereus on their sterns (239–41), an appropriate symbol for Achilles, grandson of the sea divinity Nereus through his mother Thetis. The leader of the Athenians has as his emblem the goddess Athena on a chariot with winged horses (247–52), the Boeotians have their ancestor Cadmus holding a golden serpent (253–8). The leader from Pylos, Nestor, has the Alpheus River personified with bull's feet on his stern (273–6). The Chorus' excitement at being present in Aulis forms a strong contrast to the burdened Agamemnon of the prologue, and their description of the idyllic leisure of the army gives an alternative view of the violent and restless army mob referred to later in the play.

As young women who are unconnected with the plot, the Chorus can, as the internal audience within the drama, serve as a guide for general audience response. For example, they support the decisions not to kill Iphigenia (401–2, 504–5, 975–6) and they feel pity for the misfortunes of the royal house (469–70, 1336–7). They repeatedly remind us of the strife caused by the Judgment of Paris and his subsequent abduction of Helen, which is the root of the situation at

hand (173–84, 573–89, 1253–4). Their praise of modesty (563) guides an audience to admire the modesty felt by Achilles in front of Clytemnestra and in turn by Clytemnestra and Iphigenia in front of Achilles (821–4, 833–4, 848, 1341). Where the Chorus sing of the sack of Troy, however, they give an incomplete picture of mythological events. They correctly predict the destruction of Troy and the distress of Priam's wife Hecuba (779–80) as well as the anguish of the conquered Trojan women who consider their fates as concubines (788–93). Nevertheless, they omit any mention of the devastating losses on the Greek side, and of the disastrous return journeys of the survivors. Similarly when they sing of the wedding of the nymph Thetis to the mortal Peleus (the parents of Achilles) they present that wedding as a joyous contrast to Iphigenia's "marriage" of human sacrifice (1036–97). This is, in some way, a false contrast since Thetis had been an unwilling bride forced to marry a mortal by Zeus, a point alluded to when Agamemnon says that Zeus was the lord who gave Thetis away in marriage (703). The marriage of Thetis and Peleus is thus another example of marriage born in violence, and one which did not last long.

In their final song, when the Chorus address Iphigenia as the "the citysacker" (*heleptolis*) of Troy (1512), they repeat Iphigenia's earlier appropriation (1476) of an epithet created by Aeschylus for Helen (*Agamemnon* 688). Their hymn to Artemis (1521–31) responds to Iphigenia's request that they should sing in honor of Artemis (1467–8). This connection between the Chorus and Iphigenia at the end of the drama develops the tension surrounding Iphigenia's decision. The fact that the Chorus see only the glory of the Greeks at Troy but not their ignoble actions and subsequent destruction implicitly correlates with Iphigenia's belief that she is dying for a glorious cause that will win her eternal fame. Like the Chorus, Iphigenia cannot see the full picture of future mythological events, where her death will be remembered primarily as a motive for murderous revenge by her mother. The incongruity between the joyous song of the Chorus and the grim sacrifice it accompanies may have been emphasized by discordant music in production (Gibert (1995) 253).

4 Marriage and Sacrifice

Marriage and sacrifice are important and interrelated themes in *Iphigenia at Aulis* where both are dysfunctional. Helen's adulterous relationship with Paris is a "marriage" (*gamos:* 271, 468–9). Agamemnon's marriage to Clytemnestra originates in violence and will end in murder. Agamemnon treats Iphigenia's sacrifice as her marriage to Hades, god of the Underworld (460–2, 540). Animal sacrifices were conducted at significant moments in Greek society such as before entering battle and at marriage celebrations. In its essence, the sacrifice of Iphigenia is a prebattle sacrifice since Artemis demands it only *if* the expedition is to sail against Troy (89–93, 358–9, 879, 1262–3). Iphigenia and Clytemnestra, however, believe that the "sacrifice" will be an animal one for the marriage celebration. The ritual of animal sacrifice involved garlanding the victim and leading it to the altar, where its head was sprinkled with sacred water in order to elicit a "nod" which symbolized the animal's consent to its sacrifice. Participants also sprinkled barley on the victim. These elements constituted the consecration of the victim. The animal's throat was then slit with the sacrificial knife over the altar. A reluctant

victim was a bad omen (see further Burkert (1983) and (more briefly) Burkert (1985) 55–9).

After the truth has been revealed, Iphigenia is explicitly compared to a calf by the Chorus (1083) and is garlanded before sacrifice like an animal (1477–9, 1513–14). The involvement of Artemis affords opportunities for ambiguity since marriage and war both require preliminary sacrifices to this goddess (Foley (1985) 69). The conflation of marriage and sacrifice is further emphasized by situating the sacrifice in a meadow (1463, 1544), a traditional location for the abduction of young women in Greek myth (cf. Foley (1982) 161). Most famous among these was Persephone, abducted from a meadow as an unwilling bride to Hades (in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*), a powerful analogue for Iphigenia who is a metaphorical "bride of Hades" (460–2, 540). The Chorus refer to a beautiful meadow as the location of the Judgment of Paris, thus emphasizing his passivity also as a victim of the goddesses' guile (1291–1301). The fact that Iphigenia eventually goes to her death willingly might suggest that her sacrifice is wellomened were it not for the fact that she will be dragged to the altar by her hair if she refuses to go (1361–66). Iphigenia's experience is the focus of our attention much more so than that of other young individuals in Euripides who offer their lives as a human sacrifice for the greater good of the community (Michelakis (2006) 68). Iphigenia is the only one of these young individuals who is at first extremely unwilling to die (Gibert (1995) 203), and her death is also the only example of a sacrifice exacted for a war of aggression. In *Phoenician Women* and *The Children of Heracles* a young person volunteers to be sacrificed because their city is under threat of destruction. In *Iphigenia at Aulis* the "threat" has to be extrapolated from Paris' elopement with Helen into a more general "threat" of Greek wives being abducted by barbarians (1273–5), where one instance of the crime hardly represents a real danger to the safety of Greece. This problematizes Iphigenia's choice to go willingly to her sacrifice. Achilles and the Chorus praise her for her nobility and virtue (1402–3, 1410–11, 1421–3), and she deserves praise. Nevertheless, she is deluded when she considers that her sacrifice will be a monument to her glory (1398–9), and in many respects she is unaware of the futility of her desires. When she says, with reference to Achilles, that one man's life is worth more than that of countless women (1392–4), she inverts the mythological paradigm of the Trojan war where countless men died for the sake of one woman, Helen. Iphigenia's other wishes—that her mother should not mourn for her (1437–8), that her sisters (including Electra) should not wear mourning (1448), that Clytemnestra should rear Orestes to manhood (1450), and not hate Agamemnon (1454)—are all mythologically impossible. Iphigenia claims to have insight (*IA* 1369, 1374; cf. 1409), and she may well have thematic insight in identifying a conflation of marriage and sacrifice (Foley (1985) 68–78, Gibert (1995) 239–44), but she certainly does not have mythological insight. She cannot know, of course, how events will unfold, but the audience does and this very much heightens the pathetic qualities of her selfsacrifice.

5 War, Slavery, Politics

When *Iphigenia at Aulis* was first produced, Athens had been at war with Sparta for more than twenty years. (On Euripides and Athenian politics, see also Goslin, Turkeltaub, and Barker in

this volume.) With the support of Persia, Sparta and her allies had inflicted several debilitating blows to Athens. The political power of Athens weakened dramatically over the last quarter of the fifth century. The decline of the Athenian empire can be linked to the play's engagement with the rhetoric of panhellenism, an appeal to unity among independent Greek states. Such rhetoric would develop in the fourth and third centuries BCE, but there are traces of it already in the late fifth century. In the drama, the term "panhellenic" is used to describe the army (350) and Agamemnon as its leader (141) and there is much appeal to "Greece" throughout, as if it were a unified force. It is for "Greece" that Iphigenia gives her body (1397), but Iphigenia is naïve to believe in an ideal of panhellenism since the play shows that such rhetoric is inextricable from the personal political agendas of those who support it (Michelini (2000) 56; Michelakis (2006) 78). Athens was finally defeated by Sparta in 404 BCE, just one year after *Iphigenia at Aulis* was originally performed. The defeat could not have been anticipated, of course, but a sense of the futility of war and of its wasteful destruction of innocent life must have been very much on the minds of a contemporary Athenian audience. Many of Euripides' late plays, especially those relating to the Trojan war, deal with these issues though mostly from the perspective of the defeated Trojan women. *Iphigenia at Aulis* presents a Greek sacrifice made to facilitate the Trojan war, and Iphigenia articulates her selfsacrifice in terms of Greek patriotism (1378–1401). Puppetlike, she repeats the argument made by Agamemnon that her sacrifice will make Greece free and prevent Greek wives from being forcibly abducted by barbarians (1273–5, 1378–84). She concludes her speech by saying that Greeks must rule over barbarians since Greeks are free and barbarians are slaves (1400–1).

The play prompts us to question both Iphigenia's patriotism and the categorizations of Greeks as free and barbarians as slaves (see also Kosak and Boedeker in this volume). The "barbarian" Paris is associated with idyllic pastoral landscapes (573–9, 1291–9). His upbringing as a cowherder is stressed and we are reminded that it was by divine machinations that he abducted Helen from Menelaus' halls (181, 580–1, 1300–8). On the other hand, the validity of Agamemnon's inherently tenuous claim that war is necessary so that Greek wives will not be abducted by force is completely undermined by his own forcible abduction of Clytemnestra from her first husband. There is an obvious double standard here (Luschnig (1988) 117; Gibert (2005) 230). Agamemnon is guilty of the very crime he says he wishes to eradicate, a notion compounded by the fact that Achilles refers to Agamemnon's lineage as "barbarian" (952). Agamemnon is thus cast as a barbarian who abducted his wife from another man by force. Moreover, he refers to himself as being a slave both to the masses (450) and to Greece (1269–71), a suggestion which is rhetorically reinforced by his insistence that he is acting under compulsion (443, 511, 513–14). The association of barbarians with slavery was a common one in Greek literature, which often contrasted the freedoms of democratic Athens with the tyrannical oppression of foreign monarchs whose subjects were presented as "slaves" to an autocratic ruler. Euripides, however, deconstructs such schematic polarities between Greek and barbarian in several of his dramas, implicitly questioning the veracity of ethnic stereotypes (Saïd (2002); Hall (1989) 210–23). In *Iphigenia at Aulis* Agamemnon is a "barbarian" not only because of his ancestry and his enslavement, but also because of his decision to carry out the human sacrifice of his daughter. Although young individuals (mostly female) give their lives for the benefit of the community in several Greek myths, there is no

strong evidence that the Greeks ever practiced human sacrifice (cf. Henrichs (1981), Burkert (1983) 89–90, 114–15, Hughes (1991), SourvinouInwood (2003) 30). Rather the sacrifice of a young woman in mythology represents the same privileging of community over individual as does the death of a soldier in battle (Wilkins (1990) 181). Regular practice of human sacrifice was associated with savage barbarian tribes such as the Taurians in the Black Sea. In Euripides' *Iphigenia among the Taurians* it is ironically Iphigenia who is compelled against her will to sacrifice Greeks until Athena (patron goddess of Athens) instructs the Taurian king to abandon the custom.

The trust with which Iphigenia innocently repeats Agamemnon's (supremely dubious) foreign policy as a paradigm of patriotism raises uncomfortable questions about the power and influence of individual politicians and "the mob." Agamemnon claims to be compelled by the mob and Odysseus, in league with Calchas, is apparently able to control the masses. Odysseus, whose powers of persuasion are a feature of his mythical persona from Homer on, represents the dangers of persuasive speech in a political context. For a fifthcentury audience, he would have been reminiscent of the kind of demagogues who had the ability to influence the Athenian assembly through their rhetorical skills. Agamemnon fears the army mob (515–17) and Michelakis observes that Agamemnon's fear of death and reprisals at their hands if he fails to sacrifice his daughter might well have been understandable to a contemporary audience. Just a few months before *Iphigenia at Aulis* was produced, the Athenian generals who defeated the Spartans at the naval battle at Arginusae were sentenced to death by the vote of the assembly for failing to retrieve the bodies of the fallen sailors during a storm (Michelakis (2006) 80).

Calchas is politically dangerous also because the army turns to him for prophecies in a time of despair (cf. 89), when they are at an impasse and trust his divinatory skills as the only way forward. Menelaus claims that Agamemnon turned to Calchas in a time of distress when he feared losing his chance to win fame (*kleos*) by sacking Troy (354–60). A warrior's pursuit of fame (*kleos*) through impressive exploits in battle was a legitimate and praiseworthy activity for Homer's heroes fighting at Troy. Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*, however, presents a new definition of *kleos* when the Chorus link it specifically to reputation in wisdom and goodness, which for women has to do with affairs of the heart, but for men has to do with the order that improves a city (560–72). It is a reputation for good internal political government, suggest the Chorus, that win a man fame, not the kind of aggressive foreign policy through which Agamemnon seeks it.

6 A SelfConscious Drama

By suggesting mythological impossibilities such as the abandonment of Iphigenia's sacrifice and the expedition to Troy *Iphigenia in Aulis* draws attention to the challenges of composing a new and exciting drama within the constraints of what is mythologically acceptable (on Euripides and myth, see further Wright in this volume). In the opening scene Agamemnon functions as a surrogate poet, literally trying to rewrite a mythic event (Foley (1985) 94). If we develop this reading, the first letter sent by Agamemnon symbolizes established tragic myth, while the second represents an attempt at rewriting that tradition. From the outset,

Agamemnon's letters are part of a *mythos* (story) as underlined by the Old Man's request that Agamemnon share the *mythos* with him (44), just as Agamemnon writes and rewrites his second letter. Agamemnon's response suggests the potential for doubting existing mythology. When he tells of the Judgment of Paris he adds a parenthetical "so the story [*mythos*] goes among men" (72). We are invited to question such *mythoi* "stories" with Agamemnon, although there is clearly a personal motive for his doubt in this specific story. If there was no Judgment of Paris, then there is no divine sanction for Paris' crime and more reason for reprisals to be taken against him. The Chorus and Iphigenia have no doubt that the story is true (181, 580–1, 1300–8), but the Chorus do question the story of Helen's birth and wonder whether the stories recorded on the writingtablets of the Muses are true or irrelevant (794–800). The drama answers this by suggesting that previous poetic traditions are inescapable, therefore they will always be "relevant." Mythic stories are also "true" in the sense that they give the illusion of truth within a fictive medium. As spectators (or readers), we are invited to "believe in" the story. Raising questions about the story, however, reminds an audience of the artifice behind the poetic construct.

Clytemnestra rejects the story (*mythos*) of Iphigenia's sacrifice (874), but her rejection proves futile. This can be read in connection with Menelaus' assertion of his own *mythos*. After his interception of the second letter, Menelaus claims that his story (*mythos*) has more right to be told than that of the servant (318). Since this letter effectively represents an attempt to alter Menelaus' established mythological role, Menelaus' aggression symbolizes his struggle to retain that role. Similarly when Agamemnon defends his decision *not* to sacrifice Iphigenia, the Chorus comment that this story is different from stories (*mythoi*) previously told (402–3). This is true both within the internal dynamics of the drama and in the context of earlier poetic treatments of this mythic episode. If Agamemnon is the poet attempting to exercise a creative choice in the first part of the play, Menelaus represents the tradition that circumscribes him. When Menelaus changes his mind Agamemnon has already bowed to poetic conformity (see further Torrance (2013) 158–65).

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FURTHER READING

For a more detailed but accessible introduction to *Iphigenia at Aulis*, Michelakis (2006) is an excellent starting point, with many insights on the play’s performance (83–103) and reception (105–129); on the play’s reception in the arts, see also Reid ((1993) 599–605); Luschnig (1988) is a useful general study, and Gibert ((1995) 202–54) provides a perceptive analysis of the play focusing on changes of mind among the characters (though Greek is not translated). Foley (1982) discusses in detail the issues of marriage and sacrifice, and Foley ((1985) 65–105) analyzes the intersection of the play’s themes with social rituals. Rabinowitz ((1993) 31–66) reads Iphigenia and other sacrificial virgins from a feminist perspective as “fetishized victims.” Griffin ((1990) 140–9) and Sorum (1992) discuss the play in relation to earlier poetic models, with Griffin more focused on character, Sorum on myth. Michelini (2000) discusses both the mythic and the political contexts of the play. On the textual problems of *Iphigenia at Aulis* the standard work is Page (1934). Diggle ((1994) 423–5) provides a list of all passages doubted by scholars, together with their names and the dates of their arguments. Gurd (2005) discusses critical approaches to selected passages of text over the last two and half centuries. For an accessible and less technical discussion of textual issues and production, see Michelakis ((2006) 84, 105–114).

CHAPTER 21
Bacchae

Laurialan Reitzammer

From antiquity until the late nineteenth century, the *Bacchae*, written near the end of Euripides' life and produced posthumously, sometime after 406 BCE, was thought by many to be evidence of a kind of deathbed conversion on Euripides' part, a "palinode" in which Euripides recanted his atheistic views (Dodds (1960) xl–l). The *Bacchae* brings onstage and reveals triumphant the god Dionysus. The "foreign" god arrives in Thebes in order to introduce his rites, and the Theban land runs with milk, honey, and wine, as a host of supernatural marvels—earthquake, fire, phantoms—occur, all due to the presence of Dionysus, who is victorious over his opponents and especially over Pentheus, king of Thebes, who dies after experiencing gruesome dismemberment at the hands of his mother, Agave, and her sisters. A narrative about Euripides' life took shape: Euripides left Athens and traveled north, to Macedonia, where ecstatic religion was all the rage (see Scodel in this volume). As Euripides approached death, his views changed, he finally came around to religion, and gave the god Dionysus, at least, his due. It was suggested that, whereas the playwright had previously brought onstage harsh opponents of the gods (e.g., *Ion* 439–43, *HF* 339–47), the *Bacchae* represented a departure from such searing critiques, and the play was considered a proDionysus masterpiece. A fairly uncharitable reading of Pentheus tended to go hand in hand with this interpretation. The king was seen as prudish, tyrannical, and rash, too quick to dismiss the new god. (On contemporary productions of the play, see Goff in this volume.)

The idea that the *Bacchae* offers unmixed praise of Dionysus is a glaringly simplistic reading of a complicated play, since the *Bacchae* may just as easily be read (and, indeed, has been read) as antagonistic to Dionysus. Given ancient Greek conceptions of appropriate gender roles it is possible to imagine the Greeks might have viewed Pentheus in a slightly more favorable light, a young king who is just doing his job as ruler of a *polis* (citystate), attempting to keep the women in their homes in order to avoid the complications of unruly behavior and illegitimate offspring. And whatever we think of Pentheus early on in the play, in the final scene we feel sympathy for the plight of the humans onstage. It can be argued that the divinity has responded with excessive cruelty to those who reject him. Dionysus tells Cadmus, who earlier in the play had dutifully advocated worship of the god, that he will metamorphose into a serpent and will lead an invading army against the Greeks. As the play draws to a close, Cadmus has harsh words for Dionysus, and Agave wants nothing to do with Bacchic practices.

Of course, it should be noted that what appears to us as cruelty on the part of Dionysus actually characterizes the gods in Euripides' plays and in Greek literature more generally. To take just one example, Aphrodite in Euripides' *Hippolytus* wishes to punish Hippolytus for his lack of reverence toward her and does so by using the hapless Phaedra as a pawn in her scheme (see also Ebbott in this volume). Gods (and humans) when slighted in Greek literature generally tend to respond forcefully. "Help your friends, harm your enemies" were words to live by

(Blundell (1989)), an injunction difficult to stomach for those more schooled in "do unto others as you would have them do unto you." As for Cadmus' criticisms of Dionysus, they certainly echo remarks by characters in other Euripidean plays.

Clearly, the *Bacchae* offers no single, monolithic message. Yet the controversy concerning the message of the play with regard to Dionysus remains interesting because it touches on the relationship between the *Bacchae* and Classical Athenian conceptions of Dionysus and Dionysiac ritual. We no longer ask the question—"Is Euripides for or against Dionysus?"—or —"Is the *Bacchae* pro or anti religion?" Instead, we recognize that Euripides tends to create characters that make statements frequently in conflict with the statements of other characters, and he tends to leave his audience with more questions than answers. We will never (with any certainty) reconstruct Euripides' own feelings one way or another about the gods from his plays. More recently, we have been asking different questions of the play; for example, current discussions of the play frequently draw attention to the relationship between the myths told about Dionysus and actual cult practice, a problem to which I shall return below (Henrichs (1978); Seaford (1996); Parker (2005)). And the field of Classics is currently witnessing a growing interest in gender and ritual (e.g., Goff (2004); see also Mueller in this volume). Yet, this isolated scholarly debate reveals that the Dionysus portrayed in the *Bacchae* has intrigued and baffled readers (and audiences) for centuries, and suggests that the play is saying something about Greek religion, even if there is little consensus surrounding what the message(s) might be.

Of course, it is a challenge to come to grips with the representation of divinity in Euripides' plays in general (see Lefkowitz (1989); and see Fletcher's essay in this volume); one gets the feeling that his portrayal of the gods is in some sense different from that of Aeschylus or Sophocles, but Dionysus as a god, and maenadic worship, continue to be difficult to comprehend (Henrichs (1993); Seaford (2006)). After all, the *Bacchae* presents a disturbing view of Greek religion and the god Dionysus. Swarms of Theban women abandon their homes to worship Dionysus on the mountainside where, having left behind their own children, they suckle beasts. Becoming maenads, "mad women," they rip apart fierce bulls with their bare hands. Meanwhile, the city of Thebes is filled with the raucous sounds of *tympana*, "kettledrums," or "tambourines" from a separate group of Dionysiac devotees, a traveling band of Bacchants from Asia. Out in the mountains, a mother kills her very own son in a horrific act of *sparagmos*, "ripping a victim limb from limb." How are we to make sense of this kind of religion or this kind of god? And what does the *Bacchae* and its depiction of women worshipping Dionysus have to do with contemporary Classical Athenian religion?

It is the purpose of this essay to contribute to the discussion concerning the relationship between the *Bacchae* and Greek religion, and to situate the *Bacchae* alongside other Classical Athenian texts that comment on "foreign" cult (a problematic category, as we shall see). But first, a cursory summary of a few important and fruitful treatments of the *Bacchae* will provide context for an investigation into the connections between the language in Euripides' play concerning maenads and the way Classical Athenians spoke about particular kinds of ritual within their own *polis*. As we shall see, the play is saying something about Dionysus and contemporary ritual practice, just not the sort of pro or antiDionysus statements previously

emphasized.

1 Recent Trends in Scholarship on the *Bacchae*

It is important to recognize that the *Bacchae* is set in Thebes not Athens. In tragedy, Thebes tends to be cast as a dysfunctional city, the place where everything goes terribly wrong (Zeitlin (1990)). Athens, by contrast, (and sometimes Argos, too) tends to be the place where matters are set right. Thebes, then, is a place where we might expect a perversion of normative ritual practice. What is more, since the primary concern of this essay is to consider how the *Bacchae* relates to Classical Athenian conceptions of foreign cult and nonmainstream Dionysiac ritual, it must also be emphasized that this play is not set in the fifth century BCE. Although the play was performed at the very end of the fifth century, it, like other tragedies, does not depict the world at the end of the fifth century. Athenian tragedy tends to deal with contemporary Athenian anxieties, but displaced onto a mythical past. In no way does the *Bacchae* simply reflect contemporary Athenian religious practices or attitudes.

Dionysus has been described as the elusive god, the god of paradoxes and contradictions, and as such he is difficult to sum up succinctly. He tends to confuse boundaries that the Greeks liked to keep separated—boundaries that make for social order and the tidy and sensible running of a *polis*—like the division between male and female. In *Bacchae* Dionysus (actually, his priestdisguise) is described as effeminate by Pentheus (453–59, 353) as he is in a fragment from a play by Aeschylus; and he is constantly surrounded by female figures in literary and visual texts. Dionysus also straddles the divide between god and human, with a mortal mother, Semele, and a divine father, Zeus. Oddly enough he has not one but two births, first from Semele, when she is incinerated by a lightning bolt, and second, after the king of the gods has rescued the baby from fiery destruction, and brought Dionysus to term in his thigh (his "male womb," 526–27). Dionysus is not quite Greek—in the *Bacchae* Dionysus has traveled to Thebes from the east—and he is not quite foreign, since he is returning to his home, his birthplace. A new god (he has just arrived in Thebes where he is involved in establishing his rites) and old (we have evidence for the worship of Dionysus in Linear B tablets), Dionysus is associated with the disparate (to us) realms of wine, madness, theater, and the underworld (Graf and Johnston (2007)). As Dodds puts it, Dionysus' domain is "not only the liquid fire in the grape, but the sap thrusting in a young tree, the blood pounding in the veins of a young animal, all the mysterious and uncontrollable tides that ebb and flow in the life of nature" (Dodds (1960) xii).

Even as earlier scholars condemned Euripides' dramatic works as unstructured and decadent, the *Bacchae* was wellregarded for its formal precision and "tragic spirit," and interpretations have been varied and conflicting (Mills (2006)). Famously (or infamously), Nietzsche's provocative discussion of the Apollinian and the Dionysian in *Birth of Tragedy*, and his conception of Dionysus as the "spirit of music" and nature has shown tenacious qualities (despite frequent hostility to it and disagreement with it on the part of some Classicists), surfacing even when unacknowledged in accounts of the god (Silk (1981)). More recent approaches to the *Bacchae*, to name just a few, have emphasized metatheater; gender

and Athenian ideology; psychoanalysis; and myth and cult. Of course, these approaches frequently overlap.

Dionysus is the god in whose honor dramas are performed at the annual Great Dionysia festival at Athens, and many scholars have provided useful ways of thinking about the play in terms of metatheater, in other words, the ways in which the play represents a self consciousness with regard to tragedy and, more generally, drama, since, by the time the *Bacchae* was produced, the Athenians had been watching tragic plays at the Great Dionysia for many decades and had time to reflect upon the genre (Segal (1997) chapter 7, and afterword; Foley (1980)). Discussion of metatheater must, of course, take into account the scene in which Pentheus succumbs to Dionysus and dresses as a maenad complete with long flowing gown, *thyrsos* (a fennel staff topped by ivy and/or a pinecone, an omnipresent Bacchic accoutrement), fawnskin, and *mitra* (a special headdress) in order to spy on the women on Mt Cithaeron. Dionysus is a kind of stage director who destroys Pentheus specifically with the trappings of theater: "Dionysus makes the Chorus his players and his destruction of Pentheus a 'play,' replete with set, costume, and spectators" (Foley (1980) 110). Pentheus is to play a part, disguised as a maenad, but unlike typical actors in dramatic productions, Pentheus dies in his role. Pentheus moves from being a spectator (with prurient pleasure he sets out to see what the women are doing out there in the wilds) to spectacle (he is seen by the women and killed, and the gory death scene is described in vivid detail by a messenger).

One influential study deals with the robing scene to emphasize gender and Athenian ideology (Zeitlin (1996)). Froma Zeitlin examines the ways that tragedy tends to "play the other:" if the Greek "self" is defined as male, and the woman is defined as the "other," then tragedy exhibits a preoccupation with this "other," as the woman (or crossdressed man) is placed onstage "for exploring the male project of selfhood in the larger world" (Zeitlin (1996) 347). Zeitlin begins with—and throughout the piece returns to—*Bacchae*, as a sort of paradigmatic case for tragic drama. Pentheus is destroyed by the god Dionysus, who does not simply mix up or blur gender roles; rather, the god draws on the feminine as source of his power. He is, thus, an appropriate deity for the tragic genre, so bound up with Athenian conceptions of gender:

> Pentheus's feminization is the emblem of his defeat, Dionysos's effeminacy is a sign of his hidden power . . . At the moment when the two males appear together on stage in similar dress, we might perceive an intrusive spectacle of the inclusive functions of the feminine in drama—one on the side of power and the other on the side of weakness
>
> (Zeitlin (1996) 342; see also Wohl (2005); Buxton (2009)).

It becomes clear over the course of the play that, despite his expressions of disgust concerning maenadic practices and his desperate efforts to regain control over the *polis*, it is (at least in part) Pentheus' innermost wish to see the women on Mt Cithaeron that gets him into his cross dressing predicament. Thus, the play has sparked psychoanalytic readings, with references to Pentheus' oedipal desires. Pentheus' biological father is absent, and his grandfather, Cadmus, who is old and weak, has transferred his royal power to his son. Pentheus' mother, meanwhile, offers her son, "infantile dependence on her, the 'luxury' of being held once more, like a baby, in her arms (966 ff.). The play, however, ends with the reassertion of the reality principle . . .

Pentheus' end represents the impossibility of the infantile fantasies that he is living out . . . the mother's murder of her infantilized son acts out the impossibility of this fantasy solution to the oedipal situation" (Segal (1986a) 283–84).

Each of the approaches I have surveyed emphasizes different elements in the play—the proliferation of theatrical elements, the complicated role of gender, and the workings of Pentheus' psyche. Others have pointed out that the sensational elements present in *Bacchae*—*sparagmos* (tearing apart live animals), human sacrifice, and *ômophagia* (raw eating, a practice antithetical to the Greek dietary code and sacrificial conventions in which a defining characteristic of the human condition is that meat is carved with a knife and eaten cooked)—appear to be lacking in cult practice, especially Athenian cult of the Classical period (Henrichs (1978)). It is unrealistic to think that Athenian women were liberated from their homes on a regular basis to worship Dionysus in the wilds in anything like the manner described in Euripides' play. While women did carry out important religious tasks at Athens, our sober archaeological record of Athenian religion is a far cry from the ecstatic and violent transports detailed in *Bacchae*. We have no unambiguous evidence for maenadic practices at Athens during the Classical period. We do have such evidence for later years, and from places other than Athens. Many have attempted to come to grips with the ways in which the play (and myths of Dionysus more generally) relates to ritual as it was actually practiced.

The past fifty years in scholarship on the *Bacchae* trace out two very different answers to this problem. During the 1950s and 60s, the work of Dodds (1951) provided a compelling approach to maenadic practices, shedding light on what ancient maenadic ritual had to do with manifestations of ecstatic ritual crossculturally. Yet Dodds' work spawned a somewhat literal approach to Euripides' play (even if this resulted from a misreading of Dodds' work) and scholars began to try to reconstruct actual maenadic ritual from Euripides' tragedy. A bit later, largely in response to scholarship building on Dodds' approach, Henrichs (1978) sensibly urged caution: the *Bacchae* is myth. The *Bacchae* does not have much to do with contemporary Athenian religion at all. Instead, argued Henrichs, it is necessary to distinguish between maenads in history and maenads in myth.

It has, however, been suggested that the *Bacchae* has something to do with actual religious practice at the end of the fifth century, and that the play responds to an influx of foreign cults at Athens (Dodds (1960) xxii–xxv and Versnel (1990)). Although clearly a onetoone correlation between Athenian religion and the practices represented in *Bacchae* does not exist, it is possible to contextualize the *Bacchae* within a broader discourse about foreign cult at Athens.

2 Foreign Cult

Although no unambiguous evidence exists to support the notion that women were really running off to the hills to participate in the rites described in *Bacchae,* Athenians certainly did like to imagine maenads doing precisely that. Aeschylus wrote tragedies that dealt with Dionysiac worship (although the plays do not survive); Euripides, in addition to *Bacchae*, composed

plays that dealt with the theme; and several other (less wellknown) playwrights wrote about the subject during the Classical period (Dodds (1960) xxviii–xxxiii; Seaford (2006) 91–98 and (1993)). One of the more popular subjects of Athenian vase painting was Dionysus surrounded by maenads—occasionally they are engaged in *sparagmos*, dancing with *thyrsoi*, and banging on *tympana*. These vases provide us with information about the way the Athenians imagined maenads, rather than documentation about historical maenads.

Mythical maenads, then, play a historical role in the Classical Athenian imagination, and although epigraphical or archaeological evidence about maenads at Athens during the Classical period is absent, visual and literary texts emphasize ecstatic Dionysiac ritual and maenads. As we shall see, Classical Athenian texts describe other rituals for which there is historical evidence in ways that echo, with striking precision, the way that maenads are described in *Bacchae*. These rituals in honor of gods from the East with strange (to the Athenians) names, like Adonis, Attis, Cybele, Bendis, and Sabazius, were also often associated with boisterous groups of women.

Such deities have been described as "foreign" gods. Yet it has been suggested that "the 'foreign gods' . . . are not a group recognized as such by the Greeks. They are assembled by modern scholars, in the belief that they [the foreign gods] were in fact worshipped outside of Greece" (Parker (1996) 159). And because of the negative valuation placed on foreign ritual, modern scholars have tended to describe such ritual as an aberration, essentially unGreek, an infection from abroad. These socalled foreign cults were modified and adapted once they were imported to Athens, and we should not expect an Athenian description of a foreign cult to offer accurate information about the original rites for the deity in his or her homeland. The category "foreign cult" is problematic because the distinction is not so much between Greek and nonGreek as between established and nonestablished religion.

Nevertheless, foreignness did function as a metaphor for the ancient Greeks. For example, ecstatic dancing and *tympana* playing are markers of foreign cult, and these actions (even if not *really* foreign) can underscore the strangeness of a ritual. Such practices are very much associated with Dionysus, who is portrayed in literary texts as an Eastern divinity only just arrived, although the Greeks were worshipping Dionysus as early as Mycenaean times.

Rituals in honor of gods such as Sabazius and Adonis, as well as certain nonmainstream rituals for Dionysus included ecstatic elements, a certain kind of dancing, and the sound of particular instruments. Of course, Classical Athenian texts do not characterize all foreign ritual in exactly the same way. For example, Bendis is a foreign god, yet rituals for Bendis do not carry the same connotations. As we shall see, a specific set of associations is attached to certain foreign cults in the minds of Athenians. Classical Athenian portrayals of maenadic rituals for Dionysus, as well as descriptions of informal Dionysiac rites and certain other foreign cults, consistently characterize the participants as engaging in sexual activity, drinking, and playing *tympana*.

3 Sex, Drugs, and Kettledrums

In *On the Crown*, the orator Demosthenes provides an example of the ways in which Athenians tended to group together rituals considered foreign. Demosthenes wishes to paint a defamatory picture of his opponent, Aeschines, and he brings all manner of charges against Aeschines in order to besmirch his character: his family is poor; his father is a slave; when he was growing up, he spent entirely too much time with his mother. But another way Demosthenes taints the name of his opponent is to connect him with the worship of certain questionable deities from the East, specifically Sabazius and Attis. In some texts Sabazius is virtually indistinguishable from Dionysus and he is frequently associated with wine. In a vivid and theatrical description, Demosthenes speaks of Aeschines racing through the streets with crowds of unbridled women, brandishing snakes, shouting Sabazius cries, and reveling in Attisdevotion. Indeed, later in the speech, he returns to the subject of Aeschines' mother, calling her a *tympanistria*, a player of the *tympanon*. Demosthenes associates Aeschines explicitly with the worship of marginal deities, treating Sabazius and Attis as nearly one and the same. Demosthenes is deploying peripheral ritual to disparage his opponent. It is unlikely that Demosthenes' description refers to a ritual as it was actually practiced, given the hostile purpose that the passage serves in the speech. Yet it is noteworthy that Demosthenes describes Aeschines' involvement in marginal practices, all jumbled together, a hodgepodge of nonmainstream ritual.

When it comes to Demosthenes' *own* attention to divinities, however, he takes an altogether different tack, aligning himself with deities of another sort. Earlier in the speech, the orator had paused and lingered, quite dramatically, to invoke Pythian Apollo along with other gods and goddesses connected with the native soil of Attica. During the Classical period, orators do not stand up and proclaim publicly that they themselves are devotees of nonmainstream, foreign cult like that of Sabazius or Attis. Rather, they choose to associate their opponents with such activity.

Dionysus was the recipient of a number of festivals at Athens. The Great Dionysia at Athens is a different kind of ritual activity from the maenadism portrayed in *Bacchae*, even though the Great Dionysia is in honor of the same divinity that the maenads in Euripides' play worship. The Great Dionysia had the backing of the Athenian state; it was a festival during which Athenian power was on display in the heart of Athens. By contrast, in the *Bacchae*, the representative of the state, Pentheus, king of Thebes, is very much opposed to the worship of Dionysus. In what follows, I do not discuss statesanctioned rites for Dionysus, like the Great Dionysia. Instead, descriptions of maenadic practices and nonmainstream Dionysiac practices will be my focus.

While our evidence for unofficial Dionysiac worship at Athens during the Classical period is scant, in the opening lines of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, Lysistrata grumbles:

> But if someone had called them to a festival of Bacchus, or of Pan, or to Kolias or to a festival of Genetyllis, it wouldn't even be possible to get through with all the kettledrums. But as it is, not one single woman is present here.
>
> (1–3)

Lysistrata, who wishes to put a stop to the Peloponnesian War by holding a sexstrike, is upset

because the women she has convened for the serious task of warprotest have not arrived. If she had called them to a festival, she explains, like that for Dionysus, or Pan, or Aphrodite (Kolias and Genetyllis seem to have to do with Aphrodite), the women would be there in droves with their kettledrums. The ritual that she describes in honor of Dionysus at Athens is one that has an unofficial nature, and that seems to involve groups of women and kettledrum playing (Parker (1996) 161–62 and 191–94; (2005) 325).

Euripides' *Bacchae*, more than any other extant play, offers an extended meditation on foreign, nonestablished religious practice. Three elements are consistently emphasized, as the king of Thebes describes the women who revere Dionysus as sexobsessed, drunk on wine, and associated with the clatter of *tympana*. The first words that Pentheus utters clearly formulate his position that the women who have left their homes for Mt Cithaeron to honor Dionysus are, in fact, worshipping Aphrodite: "The pretext is that they are maenad priestesses, but in reality they serve Aphrodite before Bacchus" (215–25). Dionysus, in the prologue to the play, tells the audience that he has arrived in Thebes, and that he has disguised himself as a foreigner. Pentheus does not know Dionysus is Dionysus and, what is more, he does not believe Dionysus is a god. Pentheus' position is, rather, that Dionysus is merely a charlatan, some sort of wandering magicianwizard (*goês*, 234). Since Pentheus cannot conceive that the women are worshipping Dionysus, he believes that they must be "worshipping" Aphrodite. *Ta aphrodisia*, "the things of Aphrodite," is one way that an ancient Greek could say "sex." And anxieties about uncontrolled sex and, more specifically, questions of paternity and illegitimate children loom large in this play. Pentheus associates the Theban women's activity with uncontrolled sexual activity and with the goddess Aphrodite.

The inextricability of Aphrodite and Dionysus in *Bacchae* is underscored by still another character, as the messenger explains to Pentheus, "when wine is no longer present there is no Aphrodite, and there is no longer any other pleasure for men" (773–74). Dionysus is of course the god of wine (we are told in the play that Dionysus introduced it to humans), and he is closely identified with the liquid since at one point Teiresias remarks that Dionysus, "is poured out to the gods" (284). Pentheus' first words and his vivid image of women on the slopes of Mt Cithaeron with their wine mixing bowls is but the first of several instances when Pentheus characterizes the women as bibulous and associates Dionysiac worship with wine.

Pentheus, then, associates the women's practices with sex and with drinking. But it is the kettledrums that really get to him. In the prologue to *Bacchae*, Dionysus orders his band of followers to strike their *tympana* so that the city of Cadmus may see (61). In this formulation the persistent thumping sound becomes a spectacle. The *tympana* are mentioned again in the *parodos* (first choral ode), and it is likely that the Chorus even had the instruments with them given that they refer to *this* kettledrum (124). Pentheus is most disturbed by the kettledrums when he exclaims that he will put a stop to the racket and threatens to make the women slaves at the looms (511–14).

Meanwhile, despite Pentheus' insistence that it is sex, wine, and kettledrums that characterize the women's ritual, the messenger reports that the women are, rather, conducting themselves chastely and temperately (686). The messenger goes on to explain that they are "not as you say,

drunk on wine and the sound of the pipe, slinking off to deserted spots and hunting Aphrodite through the forest" (686–88). The messenger's remark is a succinct formulation of Pentheus' triadic characterization of maenadic activity, and, moreover, in the messenger's description *auloi* (pipes), rather than the percussion instrument, provide the orgiastic music (or, rather, do *not* provide the orgiastic music, since the messenger asserts it is not happening).

While the messenger manages to witness maenadic activity and return unscathed, Pentheus does not fare so well. Despite Pentheus' hostility to Dionysus and the maenads, by the end of the play Pentheus becomes precisely what he despises, namely, a participant in maenadic practices. By the end of the play, Pentheus finds the rites for Dionysus irresistible. Despite Pentheus' hostility to Dionysiac ritual, his aversion to the practice, Pentheus too is drawn into the Dionysiac sphere.

Pentheus' characterization of maenadic activity in *Bacchae* is a typical reaction (at least as far as the Athenian imagination is concerned) to a particular kind of foreign ritual in the *polis*. Other Classical Athenian texts concerned with such religious activity describe these practices in similar ways, and Pentheus' description of the maenads may be compared with an experience that Xuthus describes in Euripides' *Ion* (for further discussion of the play, see Griffiths in this volume). After Xuthus learns that Ion is his son, Ion and Xuthus attempt to figure out who Ion's mother could be (550–54). Xuthus reveals that, years before, he participated in ceremonies for Bacchus in Delphi. He admits that it was likely that Ion was conceived when Xuthus was "in the throes of Bacchic pleasures" (553).

The passage from *Ion* associates Dionysiac ritual and sex just as in Pentheus' descriptions in *Bacchae*. As a result of the Dionysiac ritual in which Xuthus took part, an illegitimate child was produced (or rather *notionally* produced, since within the context of the play it turns out that this is, in fact, not how Ion came to be conceived). Nevertheless it is clear at this moment in the play that the Dionysiac festival that Xuthus attended is understood to be the kind of event where this sort of thing could easily transpire—sex with a participant on the part of an over eager spectator, resulting in a child. It is revealed during the investigation spearheaded by Ion that Xuthus was, to some degree, a participant in the ritual. Of course Xuthus is a man and maenadic worship of Dionysus is predominantly associated with women (Henrichs (1978) 133). But like the situation in *Bacchae* when Pentheus is overcome by the Dionysiac, the dividing line between spectator and participant becomes a bit blurry. Like Pentheus, Xuthus is brought into the *thiasos*, the maenadic group. Maenadic ritual (at least in the Athenian imagination) was troubling to Classical Athenians, and texts that underscore the breakdown between spectator and participant and showcase unsuspecting men drawn into the Dionysiac sphere emphasize these concerns (cf. Scullion (2013)).

Classical Athenian literary descriptions of the Adonia (or Adonis festival), another foreign ritual at Athens involving groups of women, confirm the picture from *Bacchae* and *Ion*. The way that Athenians conceptualize foreign ritual is consistent. At the Adonia, a festival in honor of Aphrodite and Adonis, who is from the East, women gathered together in groups, cultivated "gardens of Adonis," and climbed atop houses by means of ladders. There, the women mourned the death of Adonis by singing lamentations (Winkler (1990); Detienne (1994);

Oakley and Reitzammer (2005); Reitzammer (2008) and (2016)). The Adonis festival and maenadic worship of Dionysus look similar in texts that imagine them. For example, Moschion, a character in Menander's *Samia* (38–49) experiences a group of women holding an Adonis festival. As he explains, the activity disturbed his sleep; he looked on for a while as a spectator, but eventually joined in the festivities. In the end, he got a girl pregnant. Much of the rest of the play is concerned with the illegitimate child that resulted from Moschion's participation in the Adonis festival.

Menander's *Samia* revisits the issues seen in *Bacchae* and *Ion*. Even though the Adonia is a different ritual in honor of a different divinity, it is nevertheless described in ways that evoke descriptions of ecstatic Dionysiac worship. The tendency to associate foreign, female ritual activities with sex in the cases of Pentheus and Xuthus, is, once again, emphasized with Moschion's confession of the pregnancy. Again for Moschion, the distinction between spectator and participant is blurred, inasmuch as he joins in the Adonis festival. The same descriptive cluster, then, surrounds another foreign ritual, suggesting that it is part of a much larger discourse surrounding a particular kind of religious experience, a typical reaction to certain types of ritual practice at Athens.

Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* depicts another disgruntled representative of the *polis* who, like Pentheus, is faced with a "flareup" of female ritual activity (for a discussion of foreign cult and *Lysistrata*, see Reitzammer 2016). *Lysistrata* was produced in 411, a few years after the failed Sicilian expedition, and a scholion (an ancient note on the play) indicates that the play had an alternative title *Women at the Adonis Festival*. An unnamed Official stumbles onstage to find women occupying the Acropolis and holding a sexstrike in order to stop the Peloponnesian War:

> Official: Has the depravity of the women caught fire for everyone to see, and all their *tympana*playing and cries of "Sabazius!" and this festival of Adonis on the rooftops, which once I was hearing when I was in the Assembly? Demostratus was saying—may he rot —"Sail to Sicily!" and meanwhile his wife was dancing away and saying "Alas for Adonis!" And Demostratus was saying to levy Zacynthian hoplites and she, rather tipsy, was up there on the roof saying, "Beat your breast for Adonis!" But he rammed it through, Demostratus did, that man hated by the gods, that polluted Cholozyges. Such are the unruly acts from these women.
>
> (387–398)

The pattern recurs: sex, drugs, and kettledrums. First, the Official characterizes the women as oversexed and unruly. The word translated here as "depravity" is *truphê*, a loaded term connoting feminine excess, and one of the charges levied against foreign cult in antiquity (Parker (1996) 162). The women of *Lysistrata* are very much associated with sex/Aphrodite through their denial of sex, since, as they deny *ta aphrodisia* (sex) to their husbands, they become all the more desirable. Once again, the association between female ritual practice and drinking appears, as the Official describes the woman as a little tipsy, while the thudding *tympana* continue to be a key component in the portrayal of the ritual. What is more, in *Lysistrata*, the spectator is drawn into the ritual. By the time *Lysistrata* and her friends are

finished with him, the Official is dressed as a woman and given a veil and a sewing basket (529–38). Soon after, the women hold a mock funeral for him, as he is dressed as a corpse, becoming a kind of Adonis figure (599–613). The Official, who had earlier been so opposed to the ritual practices of the women in his *polis*, is metaphorically killed. This is precisely what happens to Pentheus in *Bacchae* who had been so hostile to the maenads, though in Pentheus' case his death is not on the level of metaphor. For the Official in *Lysistrata*, it does not really matter which of those divinities the women are worshipping, Sabazius, Dionysus, or Aphrodite; it does not really matter what specific ritual cries they make—"euoi!" (the cry that the maenads make when they revere Dionysus) or "Alas for Adonis!" It is just a lot of racket, so much noise to his ears, and such a formulation recalls Demosthenes' similar movement from Attis to Sabazius worship in *On the Crown*.

Like Demosthenes, the Official in *Lysistrata* and Pentheus in *Bacchae* dismiss the ritual practice that unnerves them as socially marginal and foreign. Yet, in *Lysistrata*, the ritual celebrated by women on the rooftops invades the male space of debate. And, since the women are foretelling the deaths that will occur as a result of the failed Sicilian expedition, the play asserts the validity of the voices of those participating in foreign activities.

Likewise, Pentheus in the *Bacchae* tries to minimize the effects of foreign ritual on his *polis*, by ordering that the city gates be shut immediately and by attempting to hunt down and contain what he imagines to be a few renegades at Thebes. Yet, in *Bacchae*, despite Pentheus' attempts to dismiss the ritual activity for Dionysus as merely marginal and foreign, Dionysus sets the whole city of Thebes dancing, including the king of Thebes himself, as he heads out to the mountains, carefully adjusting his dress and his *mitra* to watch his mother and the maenads.

In conclusion, by examining the ways that Athenians conceived of a variety of nonmainstream rituals, by looking closely at descriptions of what happens when groups of women get together to perform foreign rituals, it is possible to tease out a precise cluster of elements that recur. Characters in maleauthored texts describe women who get together in these groups as sex obsessed, drunk, and accompanied by kettledrums, precisely the way maenads are described in *Bacchae*. In addition, the distinction between spectator and participant simply does not hold when it comes to these sorts of rituals. Instead, the individuals who are describing the religious activity in all of their stereotypical language are also participating in the very same activities. The spectator—Pentheus, Xuthus, Moschion, the Official in *Lysistrata*—repeatedly becomes precisely that which he describes, and what is more, in the case of Pentheus and the Official in the *Lysistrata*, the spectator becomes precisely that which he despises. Ultimately, the preoccupation in all of these texts concerning the collapse of the boundary between spectator and participant suggests Athenian concerns about the effects of such ritual practices upon the *polis*.

We began with the old interpretive problem—is the *Bacchae* (or was Euripides) pro or antiDionysus? It is certain that Dionysus and his ritual are irresistible (whether one believes that Dionysiac practices result in beneficial or detrimental effects on the *polis*). While it would be unwise to read the *Bacchae* as a simple reflection of ritual practices or as a simple reflection of Euripides' own religious beliefs, at the same time, it would be a mistake to write

off this valuable document as pure myth, having nothing to do with contemporary Athenian religion. The presentation of cultural material pertaining to foreign practices at Athens offered here contextualizes the *Bacchae* within a much broader discourse about foreign ritual at Athens, providing a deeper awareness of the historical importance of mythical maenads at Athens during the Classical period.

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FURTHER READING

For an introduction to the *Bacchae*, a balanced discussion of the scholarship, and a thorough bibliography, an excellent place to start is Mills (2006). Dodds (1960) and Seaford (1996) provide commentaries on the play. For a detailed and informative introduction to the god Dionysus, see Seaford (2006), and see also Carpenter and Faraone (1993). Burkert (1985) and Parker (1996) and (2005) both offer authoritative accounts of Dionysus and Greek religion more generally. For Dionysus' underworld associations, see Graf and Johnston (2007). Henrichs has published extensively on the play and on Dionysus (see, for example, Henrichs (1978) and (1993). Goff (2004) provides an introduction to the growing scholarly interest in Greek religion and gender. For gender and the *Bacchae*, see Zeitlin (1996), Wohl (2005) and Buxton (2009). On metatheater, see Foley (1980) and Segal (1997). All translations are my own. I would like to thank John Gibert, Mark Griffith, David Jacobson, and Leslie Kurke for reading earlier drafts of this chapter.

PART IV
Satyr, Spurious, and Fragmentary Plays

CHAPTER 22
Cyclops

Patrick O'Sullivan

1 Satyr Drama: "Tragedy at Play"

Euripides' *Cyclops* is the only complete example we have of a genre known as satyr play, and retells the story, famously recounted by Homer in Book 9 of the *Odyssey*, of Odysseus' blinding of the maneating, oneeyed monster, Polyphemos. During the Classical period at the City Dionysia these dramas, which featured a Chorus of partanimal (usually equine), partman followers of Dionysos known as satyrs, accompanied three tragedies to comprise an overall tetralogy and were written by the tragedians themselves. On the basis of ancient Didascaliae, official records of dramatic performances at the City Dionysia (cf. also Diogenes Laertius 3.56), scholars almost universally accept that from the early fifth to the midfourth century BCE each satyr play was the last in its tetralogy, following three preceding tragedies.[1] In any case, we do know that satyr plays treated heroic myths in a more burlesque fashion than did tragedies, and, amongst other things, exploited the lechery, cowardice, and buffoonery of the Chorus of satyrs and their reprobate father Silenos for humorous effect. The antics of these figures contribute to much of the humor in these dramas as they are juxtaposed with more grand and heroic figures suited to the tragic stage, such as Odysseus in Euripides' *Cyclops* or Cyllene in Sophocles' *Trackers*, who are therefore made to seem at times pompous or ridiculous as a result. Satyr drama, it could be said, is the original "straightman, funnyman" brand of humor we know today.

The origins of satyric drama, like those of tragedy, remain obscure need not detain us for long here (for discussion, see Sutton (1980) 1–13; Seaford (1984) 10–33); Krumeich, Pechstein, and Seidensticker (1999) 6–12; O'Sullivan and Collard (2013) 22–5. Ancient sources are rather vague concerning the origins of satyr play, but what emerges clearly is that, for the ancients, satyric drama was linked in various ways to tragedy, even if the exact chronological nature of the link eludes us today. Aristotle's pronouncement that tragedy was late in achieving its grandeur because it "developed from a satyric element" and that its meter was firstly tetrameter because "its poetry was satyric and more dancelike" (*Po*. 1449a 19–23) may seem to suggest the anteriority of satyr drama to tragedy. But Aristotle nowhere specifies satyr drama as such underlying tragedy, only "a satyric element" (ἐκ σατυρικου˜). He may be alluding to the dithyrambs in which Choruses of satyrs sang hymns in honor of Dionysos from which he claims tragedy evolved (Seaford 1976). Aristotle's pupil, Chamaeleon, who wrote a book on satyr play (fr. 37 a–c Wehrli), mentions early poetic performances called *satyrika* which dealt with Dionysian themes, but that over time these *satyrika* were superseded by tragedies "when the poets no longer remembered Dionysos" (fr. 38 Wehrli). Much later, in the time of the Roman emperor Hadrian, a collector of proverbs called Zenobius recounts that satyr dramas came into being because the crowds protested that the performances had "Nothing

to do with Dionysos!" (*Prov*. 5.40). According to Zenobius, then, satyr drama comes after tragedy, in contrast to the, albeit vague, comments of Aristotle and Chamaeleon on "satyric elements" as predating tragedy. Zenobius also tells us that satyr plays were first put on as preludes to the tragedies. But, as noted above, from the fifth and to midfourth century the Didascaliae list each satyr play after the tragedies within a tetralogy. Inscriptional evidence tells us that satyr plays were separated from tragedies and became preludes much later, by 341/40 BCE (*IG* ii^2. 2320); whether or not satyr plays were ever preludes to tragedies in the fifth century or earlier is uncertain.[2] Despite these uncertainties, the evidence from Aristotle and Chamaeleon to Zenobius, though separated by more than four centuries, suggests a symbiotic relationship between tragedy and satyr play whereby the latter was a genre devoted to preserving the presence of Dionysos on some level within a dramatic context.

We are told that Pratinas of Phleius was the first to compose satyr dramas, 32 overall, and that he competed in Athens in the 70th Olympiad or 499–96 BCE (*Suda*, s.v. "Pratinas").[3] Satyric drama comprised about a quarter of the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and other tragedians down to at least the middle of the fourth century BCE, from which period the bulk of our evidence comes and which can thus be considered its "heyday" (cf. Seidensticker (2003) 100). It is generally agreed that Aeschylus' *Prometheus the FireKindler* was the satyr play accompanying his tragedies which included the *Persians* of 472 BCE (*TrGF* 3.48 T 55a), and Euripides' *Alcestis* of 438 BCE was a rare exception in being performed in place of a satyr play which nevertheless kept to themes typical of the genre (Ambrose (2005)). Satyric drama must therefore be considered an important part in the *oeuvre* of Greek dramatists; even if its remains are lamentably sparse today, fragments of this genre which continued well into the Hellenistic period and beyond can still afford insights into many aspects of ancient theater and performance culture (Krumeich, Pechstein, and Seidesticker (1999), Voelke (2001), Cipolla (2003), Harrison (2005), O'Sullivan and Collard (2013), Lämmle (2013)).

Satyr play was a highly selfconscious genre enagaging not only with the same sorts of myths as tragedy, but also with specific literary forms including epic and tragic poetry (Hunter (2009) 56; cf. Zagagi (2003)). But satyr plays keep to the realm of heroic myth and do not, as a rule, explicitly lampoon public figures and contemporary events as Old Comedy frequently did; Python's *Agen* (fr. 1) performed for Alexander in India and Lycophron's *Menedemos* (frr. 2–4) which parodied the philosopher of that name, are exceptions from the late fourth and third centuries BCE. In diction, meter, and structure, satyr play is generally closer to tragedy than to comedy (Krumeich, Pechstein, and Seidensticker (1999) 32–9; Griffith (2005) 166–72; cf., however, Shaw (2014)), and, despite its earthy concerns and folktale elements, is not altogether lacking in moments of pathos and poignancy. Satyric drama was aptly dubbed in antiquity as "tragedy at play" (Demetrios, *Eloc*. 169), and in Euripides' *Cyclops* burlesque and earthy concerns as well as more serious matters are all clearly in evidence.

The earliest known mention of satyrs comes from Hesiod, who in characteristically curmudgeonly fashion dismisses them as "worthless and useless for work" (Hesiod fr. 10a.18 MW). From an early stage satyrs, who may be Peloponnesian in origin, have counterparts in the form of Attic/Ionic silens or silenoi (Brommer (1937) 2–5). Silens appear in Greek art of

the early sixth century BCE on the blackfigure François Vase of circa 570 BCE (Florence 4209) in an episode that later became a satyr play, *The Return of Hephaistos* (cf. Achaeus fr. 17), in which the god is brought back to Olympos under the influence of wine to be reconciled with his mother Hera. Already on the François Vase the silens have in exaggerated form the hybrid features that became synonymous with the satyrs onstage: huge, erect phalloi and equine legs and tails.

Many have plausibly seen the influence of satyr drama on satyric scenes on vases from circa 520 BCE onward (Buschor (1943); Hedreen (1994); Easterling (1997c)). But perhaps the most important piece of visual evidence for satyr drama and satyric costumes of the Classical period is the Pronomos Vase (Naples 3240) of the late fifth century BCE, now the subject of renewed scholarly attention (Taplin and Wyles, eds. 2010). Here we see a large number of figures including Dionysos and a female figure, musicians (including the aulosplaying Pronomos), the Chorus of a satyr play, and three actors, one in the costume of Heracles who faces an actor playing Silenos. This actor wears a costume covered in tufts of white hair and has a leopard skin draped over his shoulder; he holds a mask depicting the aged satyr as evidently balding, with a heavily furrowed brow and bushy white hair and beard. The satyr Chorus is played by beardless young men in costumes which tell us much about the appearance of satyrs onstage at least around the late fifth century. They each wear a furry loin cloth with a short tail at back and a not exceedingly large erect phallus at the front; the more equine features of the silenoi on the François Vase have thus become more understated on these satyrs whose legs are in human form. That said, the satyrs in their exposed genitalia and virtual nudity comprise a significant contrast to the three actors in their dignified and richly decorated costumes suited to tragedy. One Chorus member, wearing the mask of a satyr, is, in effect, *in propia persona* and seems to be performing the "sikinnis", a dance alluded to by Silenos in Euripides' *Cyclops* (37) and generally associated with satyrs by the ancients (Aristoxenos frr. 104, 106 Wehrli; for modern discussions, see Voelke (2001) 138–43; Seidensticker (2010) 213–29). The contrast between the Chorus members and other actors is further evident on the masks the satyrs wear, which depict them as snubnosed, with bushy beards, enlarged pointed equine ears and heavy, sometimes furrowed, brows all of which give them a grotesque look; indeed, Aeschylus' satyr play *Theoroi* gets comic mileage out of the conventional ugliness of satyrs which would frighten even their mothers (O'Sullivan (2000), esp. 360–3). Such features are typical of satyrs in fifthcentury vase painting and again stand in contrast to the more restrained expressions and neat coiffures of the masks held by the other actors. Thus, the "straightman, funnyman" brand of humor noted above is given visual form in the contrasting costumes and masks worn by the actors and Chorus members. The Pronomos Vase corroborates visually the idea that satyr drama was "tragedy at play."

Satyr plays were crucial to the overall experience of theater at the City Dionysia, since the last onstage images and sounds to occur before fifthcentury Attic audiences at the end of a day watching four dramas were, it seems, almost always the final moments of this hybrid genre. Aeschylus himself was considered the finest exponent of this genre in antiquity (Pausanias, 2.13.6–7; Diogenes Laertius, 2.133), which suggests a different side to the blustering, militaristic figure Aristophanes makes of him in the *Frogs* (see also Ussher 1977). It is likely

that our view of the great tragedians, and Greek drama generally, would be significantly different had more satyr plays survived. Tony Harrison, whose *Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* engagingly reworks Sophocles' satyric *Ichneutae* or *Trackers*, goes further: "With the loss of these plays we are lacking important clues to the wholeness of the Greek imagination, and its ability to absorb and yet not be defeated by the tragic" (Harrison (1990) xi). It is hard to dispute this, but much can still be gleaned from *Cyclops* and the remains of this genre and its varied links to the broader culture of its times (Krumeich, Pechstein, and Seidesticker (1999), Voelke (2001), Cipolla (2003), Harrison (2005), O'Sullivan and Collard (2013), Lämmle (2013)).

2 *Cyclops* and Major Themes of Satyric Drama

The date of *Cyclops* is unknown. Some have used the criterion of "thematic parallels" with other plays of known dates and postulated, for instance, a date of circa 424 BCE to bring it in line with Euripides' *Hecuba*, produced around that time, which features the blinding of the Thracian king Polymestor and his reappearance (Arrowsmith (1956) 2 n. 1; Sutton (1980) 108–20; cf. Kaibel (1895) 84–5). There is some consensus that *Cyclops* seems to come from later in Euripides' career on stylistic grounds, namely the high incidence of resolution in Odysseus' iambic trimeters comparable with other Euripidean plays whose dates are known, for example *Helen* and *Phoenissae* of 409. In addition, the detection of close verbal parallels between *Cyclops* and other datable plays, such as Aristophanes' *Women at the Thesmophoria* of 411 and Sophocles' *Philoctetes* of 409 has led some to suggest a specific date of circa 408 which seems to be gaining favor (Seaford (1982)). But our uncertainty regarding the exact date of the play is not a major hindrance to our understanding of its key themes and dramaturgy.

Euripides' *Cyclops* embodies many of the tropes of satyric drama generally, many of which have been identified as folktale motifs (Sutton (1980) 145–59; Seaford (1984) 33–44; Krumeich, Pechstein, and Seidensticker (1999) 28–32; O'Sullivan and Collard (2013) 28–39). Preeminent among these motifs is a fantastic setting in a distant—from Athens—locale in which the satyrs find themselves in a predicament of some sort: enslaved by an ogre until rescued by a Greek hero. Again, they may be part of a quest as in Sophocles' *Ichneutae* or *Trackers*, in which they try to find Apollo's cattle, stolen by the infant Hermes. At other times they are confronted with a cultural artefact such as vividly impressive artworks (Aeschylus' *Theoroi* fr. 78a), or Hermes' amazing lyre music (Sophocles, *Ichneutae* fr. 314.131–68), or they may even be present at the first appearance of Pandora (Sophocles, *Hammerers* or *Pandora* frr. 483–6), from whom Hesiod tell us, "the race of women is sprung" (*Theogony* 590). Sometimes satyrs will try their hand at "new" activities such as athletics (Pratinas, *Wrestlers*; Aeschylus, *Theoroi* fr. 78c; Euripides, *Autolycus* fr. 282). Arguably, the main theme of *Cyclops* is liberation from an ogre defeated by Greek hero who frees the satyrs and paves the way for their reunion with Dionysos; but the play also deals with issues such as hospitality and friendship (and transgressions thereof), impiety and its consequences, gluttony, drunkenness and lechery. All such themes are common to many other satyr plays, and in the *Cyclops* are approached with a mixture of seriousness and at times brutally bawdy humor.

3 Setting the Scene

The play begins with a monologue by Silenos, who complains to his absent master of the dire situation he and his sons face as slaves of the brutal Cyclops and reveals how they ended up there (1–40). In explaining how the satyrs became lost when they were trying to rescue their master who had been kidnapped by pirates, Silenos encapsulates a number of important motifs for this and other satyric dramas (17–26):

> . . . an easterly gale descending on the ship threw us onto this rock of Etna [20], where the oneeyed children of the seagod, the Cyclopes who kill men inhabit their isolated caves. We were caught and are slaves in the house of one of them. They call the master we serve Polyphemos. And instead of Bacchic revels [25] we tend the flocks of a godless Cyclops.

Here we encounter the motif of the enslavement of the satyrs by a monstrous overlord who is "mankilling" and "godless", identified as Polyphemos. This theme is common to other satyr dramas: Aeschylus' *Lykourgos* (frr. 124–6) about this enemy of Dionysos was set in Thrace; Sophocles' *Amykos* (fr. 111–12) about Polydeukes' defeat of the murderous boxer took place in the Bosporus; Euripides' *Bousiris* (frr. 312b–315) told of Heracles' triumph over the cannibalistic, humansacrificing pharaoh in Egypt; and Sositheos' *Daphnis or Lityerses* (fr. 1a–3), set in Phrygia, recounted another Heraclean victory over a molester of travelers.

Schooled in Homeric epic, Euripides' fifthcentury audience will have a general idea of what to expect of *Cyclops*, but the same story was dealt with in comedies by Epicharmus (frr. 70–2 KA) and Cratinus (frr. 143–57 KA) and in another satyr play by Aristias (*TrGF* I 9 fr. 4); it was also popular in Greek art from the Archaic period on (*LIMC* VIII.1 s.v. "Polyphemos" I 16, 17, 18, 20). Although almost nothing survives of these dramas, it is likely that they made some impact on the Euripidean account in addition to Homer's version. For instance, Euripides locates his drama on Sicily, possibly following an innovation of Epicharmus; in *Odyssey* 9 the home of the Cyclopes is never made clear. But in *Cyclops*, the Sicilian location is mentioned no fewer than fourteen times in a play of just over 700 lines (20, 60, 95 (twice), 106, 114 (twice), 130, 298, 366, 395, 599, 660, 703). By the fifth century, of course, Sicily had had a long history of sophisticated Hellenism, but, as Thucydides (6.2–5) recognized, had also been home to Greek and nonGreek alike. Yet Euripides' drama presents the location as a barbaric dystopia, hostile to Greek religion and law, that is emblematic of the brutal nature of its natural inhabitants, the maneating Cyclopes (O'Sullivan (2012)). Silenos speaks of their current location as the "rock of Etna" (20) and the homes of the Cyclopes as "isolated caves" (22). This lack of a civilized environment is consistent with the impious cannibalism of Polyphemos (30–1), who is removed geographically as well as culturally from civilized Greek society.

Attention now turns to the parodos, or the arrival of the Chorus in the form of fifteen satyrs returning the monster's sheep which have been grazing. The parodos (41–81), composed in lyric meters different from the iambic trimeters of Silenos' prologue, extends much in Silenos' litany of complaints and thus reminds the audience of certain motifs in the satyrs' condition: their enslaved state, role as forced laborers (64–72), and separation from their god, whose friendship with his entourage is emphasized in the epode or aftersong (73–81):

O my friend, O my friend Bacchos,

where are you, wandering, separated from your followers,

do you shake your golden hair? [75]

I, your very own servant,

am serf to the Cyclops,

wandering in exile as a slave to this oneeyed monster,

and wearing this miserable goat skin cloak, [80]

separated from your friendship.

Some have doubted the authenticity of lines (73–5) on stylistic and metrical grounds (Seaford (1984) *ad loc*.), but the lines have been ably defended on the same grounds (Ussher (1978) *ad loc*.; cf. Kovacs (1994) 146).[4] Either way, *philia* (friendship) is important here in underscoring the satyrs' relationship to their god (81), and gains a certain poignancy as the satyrs allude to the absence of their god and his cult ("No Bromios here"), interestingly, immeditately after their reference to "the crags of Etna" (62).

The situation outlined by Silenos and the satyrs cries out for the inevitable wandering hero, and soon the old satyr notices a Greek ship which turns out to be that of Odysseus. Once again, the brutality of the despotic monster and his homeland, which is described as "hostile to strangers" and thus to the Homeric law of hospitality (*xenia*), are made clear; Silenos even evinces some sympathy for the unwitting new arrivals (89–95):

> O unhappy strangers! Whoever are they? They have no idea what our master [90] Polyphemos is like, and that the land they have reached is hostile to strangers and that they have come, by an ill fate, right into the maneating jaws of the Cyclops. But quieten down so that we can learn where they've come from to be here at Sicilian Etna's rocky outcrop.

Odysseus appears as the squarejawed hero of epic, but his grandiose pretensions are soon punctured in a typical instance of satyric humor juxtaposing the grand and the comic. After announcing himself as "lord . . . of the Cephallenians," Silenos brings Odysseus down to earth, calling him a "shrill, relentless babbler of the race of Sisyphos" (103–5), the infamous rogue who featured in other satyr dramas (e.g., Aeschylus frr. 225–34; Critias fr. 19; Euripides frr. 673–4). As Odysseus and the old satyr soon engage in a lengthy line by line exchange or *stichomythia* (102–62), again the dismal plight of the satyrs and now of Odysseus and his crew becomes clear: the land is bereft of any buildings and there are no people dwelling on it (115–118). As was the case with the Cyclopes in Homer's account (*Odyssey* 9.112–15) there are no signs of civilization in terms of communal laws; and in Euripides' version democracy is conspicuously absent (119–20). Agriculture, viticulture—glossed as the domains of Demeter and Dionysos—are absent, too (121–4); the native inhabitants are ruthless maneaters (125–8). Euripides thus develops the motif of liminal and distant setting of satyr plays to underscore the barbarism of Polyphemos and Cyclopes generally and to forge a bond of friendship at least

between the Chorus of satyrs and Odysseus who all desire to escape from the island as soon as possible.

4 Burgeoning *Philia*: Odysseus and the Satyrs vs Polyphemos

As Odysseus gives Silenos wine in exchange for food from the monster's cave, we see the infamous lechery of the old satyr return as he indulges in two of his favorite pastimes; excessive drinking and sexual fantasizing (168–74). By this time a certain amount of good will has been established between Odysseus and the satyrs, couched in terms of *philia*. But the Chorus lower the tone with their own prurience and misogyny (175–87):

> CH:
>
> Listen, Odysseus. We'd like to talk something over with you. [175]
>
> OD:
>
> Well, of course, since you come to me as friends to a friend.
>
> CH:
>
> Did you take Troy and Helen captive?
>
> OD:
>
> Yes, and we sacked every house belonging to the sons of Priam.
>
> CH:
>
> So, when you had captured the young woman, did you all bang her, taking it in turns, [180] since she enjoys having sex with lots of partners anyway, the traitor. When she saw him sporting all that fancy trouserequipment round his legs, and his gold necklace all around his neck, she was swept away, leaving behind that excellent little fella, Menelaos. [185] I wish that the race of women had never been created anywhere at all . . . except for me alone!

Odysseus makes clear that he and the satyrs are now "friends," although this will be short lived in the case of Silenos; and the selfsatisfied tone in his response to their question about Troy is consistent with his heroic posturing elsewhere in the play (198–202, 476–82, 603–5). But, as we would expect of the sons of Silenos, the satyrs are only interested the idea of gang raping Helen, whom they consider a nymphomaniac, as if this were the sole motive for the war. Here there is the comic incongruity of the heroic juxtaposed with the lecherous, typical of satyric humor. The misogyny of the satyrs here plays games with earlier Greek literature where hatred of women is found: from Hesiod's account of Pandora (*Works and Days* 60–90; *Theogony* 571–90) and Semonides' infamous rant (fr. 7, esp. 72, 96–7) to the especially

conspicuous utterances of certain figures in tragedy, such as Eteocles in Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes* (187–90, 256), Euripides' Jason (*Medea* 573–5), and Hippolytus (*Hippolytus* 616–50) who incurs the fatal wrath of Aphrodite. But the lechery of the satyrs gets the better of them here, and they collectively fantasize about having all the women of the world to themselves, thus comically recasting the bitter misogyny found in tragedy and elsewhere. Understandably, the lechery, buffoonery, and doublestandards exhibited by the satyrs here has led some critics to see them as "ithyphallic males behaving badly" (Hall (1998)) and "the antitypes" of the ideal Athenian citizen (Lissarague (1990a) 1990b).

But the real villain of the piece, Polyphemos, soon makes his appearance, barking orders to the terrified satyrs and making clear his hostility to Dionysos (203–5, 210–11):

> CYCLOPS: Get out of the way! Make way! What's this? What's this idleness? Why are you performing a Bacchic revel? There's no Dionysos here, no castanet of bronze, no rattle of the drums! [205] . . . What have you got to say for yourselves? What do you say? One of you will soon start shedding tears [210] courtesy of my club! Look upwards, not down!

The monster's opening words echo, but in the form of a brutal boast, the lament of the Chorus that there is no Bromios, a title of Dionysos (cf. Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 24; Euripides, *Bacchae* 66, etc.), nor any place for his cult on the island (63–4). Such hostility to the god was a theme of many tragedies, Euripides' *Bacchae* being the most famous example (cf. also Aeschylus' *Pentheus* fr. 183; *Bacchae* fr. 22; Iophon fr. 2; Xenocles fr. 1; and see Reitzammer in this volume); the story of Lykourgos, the king who opposed Dionysos, was not only the subject of an Aeschylean satyr play (frr. 124–6), but also of tragedies and a satyr play by Polyphrasmon in his *Lykourgeia* tetralogy produced in 467 BCE (fr.1; cf. T 3 Snell). As Homer's *Odyssey* had made clear Polyphemos' hostility to Zeus and Olympian values (9.273–8), Euripides in the *Cyclops* gives this a satyric turn by making the monster an enemy of Dionysos. Inevitably, this antiDionysian hostility makes Polyphemos an enemy not only of the satyrs, but of Odysseus, Zeus, and Greek values generally (320–35, 338–46).

Before this confrontation, we witness a gross violation of *philia* by the old satyr and its assertion by the Chorus. When Polyphemos returns, Silenos tells his outrageous lie that Odysseus and his men are not only thieves but intend to torture Polyphemos and sell him into slavery; this leads to the monster's resolve to cook and eat the new arrivals, a decision Silenos cruelly endorses (232–52). Odysseus' straightforward account of what has really happened is denied by Silenos in an oath as ludicrous and sycophantic as it is false, and culminates in his willingness to forfeit his sons' lives if he is forsworn (255–69). As has been argued, such (ab)use of language puts Silenos on much the same level of impiety as Polyphemos, and both pay a price as a result (Fletcher (2005)). But before then the bonds of *philia* between father and son are severed, at least temporarily, and those between the satyrs and Odysseus affirmed, when Silenos finishes off his false oath only to be countered by the Chorus (268–72):

SI: By Poseidon, your own father, O Cyclops, by great Triton and Nereus, by Calypso and the daughters of Nereus, by the holy waves and the entire race of fishes, [265] I swear, O my most handsome little Cyclops, O my darling little master, that I really was not going to sell your things to these strangers. Otherwise may these miserable boys of mine, whom I love (φιλῶ) so dearly, die a miserable death.

CH: That's what *you* deserve. I myself saw you selling his property to the strangers. [270] If I'm telling lies, may my father die. (*To the Cyclops*) Don't wrong the strangers.

In other satyr dramas conflict between father and sons is evident, mostly in the form of Silenos' abusing his sons (Sophocles, *Trackers* fr. 314.145–68; Lycophron, *Menedemos*, fr. 2). But here the satyrs not only dispute their father, but stand up to the monster directly and command him not to harm the strangers. It is not too much to see courage on the part of the satyrs here, even if later they display their far more expected cowardice in backing out of Odysseus' plans to blind the giant (635–50). Silenos distorts *philia* on two levels here: firstly by falsely claiming to love his sons so much; secondly by siding with Polyphemos here in a transgressive form of *philia* that is based on a lie and ends in his bizarre rape by the monster (576–89). Conversely, the *philia* between Odysseus and the Chorus is strengthened by the satyrs' stance against their father and the monster.

In what is sometimes called the *agōn* or debate of the play (285–346) the cultural gulf separating man from monster becomes clear. Odysseus announces firstly that he and his men are suppliants, and, invoking again the concept of *philia*, even describes himself and his men as "friends" of the monster (287–8). From here he moves onto specious claims about how the Trojan War had saved Greece from Trojan aggression and had benefited the monster as a supposed inhabitant of a land that is Greek (290–8). Many have found seeing Odysseus here using cynical and even comically inept arguments (e.g., Arrowsmith (1956) 2–8; Seaford (1984) 56; Worman (2002) 113–23) and Euripides may well be playfully undercutting the rhetorical powers of this hero whose eloquence was lauded widely from Homeric epic onward (*Iliad* 3.206–221, etc.). In any event, the hero's further claims about the importance of the law of hospitality (299–311) recall much of his Homeric counterpart's warning to Polyphemos (*Odyssey* 9.266–71). Odysseus' tone reminds us that satyr play could be solemn at times, paralleling motifs from tragedies regarding deaths already caused by the Trojan War (Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 326–9, 430–57; cf. *Seven against Thebes* 48). In language that recalls Silenos' description of the Cyclopes' impious and unholy ways (30–1), Odysseus urges the monster to refrain from impious actions (309–11), just as the prophet Teiresias does when warning the Theban tyrant Pentheus not to disparage the rites of Dionysos (Euripides, *Bacchae* 309). Odysseus finishes with a warning, thereby marking a significant change in tone from the pleas which opened the speech.

Polyphemos' rejection of all these arguments (316–46) reveals him as a figure of greed, lawlessness, impiety, and debauchery. While he sees through Odysseus' claims about the need to save Greece, including the temples of his father Poseidon, from Troy, everything else in the monster's speech depicts him as an ogre suited to satyric drama. Wealth and sacrificing to his belly are most important to him (318–19, 334–8). He renounces the authority of Zeus (320–1),

and even claims to rival Zeus' thunderings, not by impiously imitating the god, as did another another satyric ogre, Salmoneus (Sophocles frr. 537–41a; cf. Diodorus Siculus 6.7, etc.), but through the sordid habit of masturbation (327–8). The monster thus leads a life of excessive *autarkeia* or selfsufficiency which causes him to reject Olympian values (322–33) and concepts of *philia* (Konstan (1990) 215, 216–17); it is also worth noting again Silenos' explanation that no Cyclops pays any attention to any other, pointing to an absence of *philia* among them (120). The monster allegorizes "Zeus" as nothing more than the ability to glut and pleasure oneself (336–7), and cruelly parodies the idea of *xenia* by saying he will offer it to his guests in the form of a bronze cauldron which will cook them (342–6). Many have seen Polyphemos here as a sophistic figure (Wilamowitz (1926b) 21; Duchemin (1945) 118; Kovacs (1994), 56; cf. Seaford (1984) 52–3), pointing either to Thrasymachus in Plato's *Republic* and his supposed view that justice is what is "advantageous to the stronger party" (338c–339a, etc.), or to Callicles, who in Plato's *Gorgias* attacks conventional ethics and law and argues for a "greed is good" mentality (esp. *Gorgias* 482c–484d; 491e–492c). But Thrasymachus does not necessarily state that "might is right"; instead his view seems to be more a critique of specious claims to "justice" made by governments which frame laws to suit themselves and exploit their own citizens (Guthrie (1962) 88–97; O'Sullivan (2005) 125–8). There is, however, a more plausible link here between Polyphemos' views and those of the Platonic Callicles, who does support those of a tyrannical disposition, since he believes that it is "justice" for the strong to sate their desires at the expense of the weak (*Gorgias* 491e–492c). But, as Plato makes clear, Callicles is no fan of the sophists or teachers of "excellence" whom he describes as "worthless" (*Gorgias* 520a). Polyphemos, then, is not so much a sophistic figure, but is better understood as a parody of a tyrannical figure. Such a figure when demonised in Attic literature, invariably embodies the following tropes: a contempt for law, greed, desire to enslave others, brutal lechery, and violence—albeit not in quite the same grotesque manners as exhibited by the Euripidean Polyphemos. As becomes clear throughout the course of the play, Polyphemos in *Cyclops* embodies many of these features as well (for full discussion with references, see O'Sullivan (2005) 128–59). In this manner, the monster resembles many other ogres in satyric drama who also happen to be tyrants or debauched monarchs, for example the Lykourgos of Aeschylus and Polyphrasmon, Sophocles' Salmoneus, Euripides' Busiris, or Sositheus' Lityerses, among others.

The play now reaches its darkest moment as Odysseus' men are driven into the cave and the hero desperately calls on Athena, then Zeus as god of hospitality. The choral song which follows (356–74) dwells on the impiety and cruelty of the monster's cannibalism, and is one of protest and despair, contrasting strongly with the malicious glee of Silenos who had encouraged the Cyclops to eat the strangers (250–2, 313–15). Gluttony as a satyric theme now has moved from being merely crass to something darkly transgressive, and Euripides reminds us again that the Cyclops is a native of Etna (366), thus emphasizing the link between the ogre and his Sicilian habitat. Odysseus' reemergence from the cave confirms the Chorus' worst fears when he answers their question (377–8):

> CH: What is it, Odysseus? That most godless Cyclops hasn't really feasted on your dear companions, has he?

The question sees the monster's crime as unholy and an affront to *philia* in the reference to the victims as Odysseus' "dear companions." Odysseus' long description of Polyphemos' cannibalism (382–436) is the satyric countertpart to the typical "messenger speech" in tragedy which desribes often violent or spectacular action that takes place offstage. The monster's impiety (396) and gluttony are stressed not least by reference to the vast size of his drinking vessels (388–91), typical of satyric ogres such as Lityerses who drinks from the same size jar (Sositheus fr. 2.7–8). Unlike his Homeric counterpart, who eats his victims raw (*Od*. 9.289–92), the Euripidean Polyphemos is something of a transgressive gourmand, cutting the dead men's flesh, roasting and boiling it (390–405; cf. 241–9), consistent with Cratinus' telling of the story (fr. 150 KA; see also Seaford (1984) 51–9).

But Odysseus' speech also forms a turning point in the play whereby "something divine" (411 τι θει˜ον) comes to him which will enable him to punish the Cyclops, escape the island and reunite the satyrs with their natural master, Dionysos. Odysseus will exploit the monster's gluttony and unfamiliarity with wine by getting him drunk, thus making the god, often considered wine personified (Euripides, *Bacchae* 275–83; *Cyclops* 156, 415, etc.), more central to the story. The major satyric themes, then, of the downfall of an ogre, escape from a distant locale and a return to Dionysian joy are all broached here, and this last aspect in particular is couched in terms of a threeway *philia* between Odysseus, the satyrs, and Dionysos (428–30, 434–8):

> OD: So tell me if you do or don't want to escape this monstrous [lit. "not to be mixed with"] man and live in the halls of Bacchos with the Naiad nymphs. [430] . . . you—since you're still young—be saved with me and resume your old friendship [435] with Dionysos, who's not like the Cyclops.
>
> CH: O dearest friend, if only we could see that day when we escape the godless presence of the Cyclops!

From here the revenge motif becomes more conspicuous in the drama (441–2). It is not enough merely for Greeks and satyrs to escape; the old ethic of helping friends *and* harming enemies must be invoked (e.g., Archilochus fr. 26 W; *Theognidea* 337–40; see Blundell for more references (1989), esp. 1–25). As Odysseus gradually reveals his plans to blind the Cyclops, the satyrs' enthusiasm grows excitedly (465; cf. 624–5). Odysseus announces that he will rescue the satyrs, his men whom he again calls "friends", and magnanimously includes Silenos. This pivotal scene, which began with an account of the horrors within the monster's cave, now ends on an upbeat note, with another invocation of *philia*. Odysseus again asserts, in somewhat pompous style, the importance of *philia* to his own heroic identity and as a motivation for his actions (478–82):

> I shall not save myself alone and abandon the men who are my friends inside. However, I could flee and I have emerged from the recesses of the cave. [480] But it would not be right for me to abandon my friends with whom I came here and be the only one saved.

Some doubt the authenticity of lines 480–2 due, among other things, to word repetition, perceived ineptitude of style and "lameness" of sentiments (Diggle (1981); Seaford (1984);

Kovacs (1994)), but most editors keep them. Even if we grant that such language is stilted and sermonizing, we need not discard it, since it is also typical of Odysseus' posturing and affected way of speaking elsewhere in the play (96–8; cf. 198–202, 603–7). On another level his expression is suitable here, albeit comically, since the grandiose hero also wants to set himself apart from the excited antics of the satyrs as the play approaches its decisive action.

5 With(out) a Little Help from his Friends, or Odysseus' Revenge

Now the satyrs focus gleefully on wreaking revenge on the monster, who is derided for his tonedeaf singing and ignorance, and whose punishment will be an education of sorts for him: "let us educate him . . . the ignoramus" (489–93; cf. 173). In the next strophe Dionysian and erotic themes become more explicit in the satyrs' *makarismos*, or song of blessing, briefly describing activities of the typical reveler or *komast* in a general context of *philia* as he embaces a "dear male companion," while an hetaira waits for him on the bed (495–502). A distorted version of this image becomes concrete in the appearance of Polyphemos, the transgressive reveler *par excellence*, who, when he appears, not only brags of his drunkenness, but is derided by the satyrs as a beautiful groom on his wedding night in the mood for love (511–18).

Interestingly, the monster has felt the urgings of the communal Dionysian *thiasos*, or ritual celebration of the god (445–6, 508), after tasting wine for the first time, and even refers to his "brother Cyclopes" (531) and "friends" (533). In the lengthy stichomythia that follows Odysseus must keep him at home for his plan to work (521–69). Part of this involves educating Polyphemos in the niceties of the symposium, a likely motif of other satyr plays in which a boorish or awkward figure such as Heracles or Hephaistos is instructed in sympotic etiquette (Ion *Omphale* frr. 21–7; Achaeus *Hephaistos* fr. 17). Odysseus takes command of the situation early, speaking at times misleadingly (524, 526, 528) and invoking the famous Homeric trick of calling himself "Nobody" (549). All the while he plies the monster with drink called "the Bacchic one," a title of Dionysos; wine is presented to the Cyclops as the god himself (519–29, 575). The god who is the friend of the satyrs thus plays a crucial role in aiding Odysseus in his plan (cf. 411); from here the presence of the god emerges more palpably as a force in the downfall of his selfproclaimed enemy, Polyphmeos (cf. 203–5). The Cyclops here also comes under the influence of his foe in similar fashion to the way in which Pentheus in the *Bacchae* (811–46) falls under the sway of his destroyer, Dionysos (Sutton (1980) 128). In mistaking Silenos for Ganymede (582–9), the monster also puts himself on the same level as Zeus, who famously loved the Trojan prince (Homer *Iliad* 20.232–5); the monster's delusion therefore is consistent with his earlier hubristic claims to rival the supreme god (320–1, 328), a trait he shares with the ogre and title character of the satyric *Salmoneus* by Sophocles (frr. 537–41a). The rape of Silenos not only recalls the bizarre erotics that began the scene in the satyrs' parody of the Cyclops as lover (511–18); it is also a fittingly comical, if grotesque, way to bring the distorted *philia* between monster and reprobate satyr to its climax, so to speak.

In addressing the satyrs as "sons of Dionysos, noble children" (590), Odysseus once more alludes, albeit metaphorically, to the presence of their patron god, who is certainly a better role model than their real father. Odysseus prays to Hephaistos and the primordial deity, Sleep, with more heroic selfaggrandisement and another threat to downsize the status of the gods if aid is not forthcoming (599–607; cf. 353–55); after this the Chorus perform a short astrophic song gleefully anticipating the blinding of the monster, and finishing with another statement of their desire for their god (620–22):

And I want to look on Bromios, whom I long for, [620]

who loves to wear ivy,

and to leave the Cyclops' desolate land.

The longing of the satyrs to see their god reflects the *philia* they share with him, and is expressed with enough passion and evident noise to make Odysseus think they will wake the monster, thus drawing an angry rebuke from the hero who sees the Chorus now as "beasts" (θηˆρες: 624–8).

When the satyrs come up with—in some cases, literally—lame excuses for not helping blind the monster (635–41), Odysseus, as if invoking Hesiod, calls them "worthless men and nothing as allies" (ἄνδρες πονηροὶ κοὐδὲν οἵδε σὐμμαχοι, 642), something which he has long known (649). Yet even in this situation Odysseus does not despair of them completely, and values their support which he sees as a source of courage for himself and his men, now called "close friends."

> OD: . . . I'm going to have to use my close friends for this. [650] But if there's no strength in your arm, then at least urge us on anyway, so we may get some courage for our friends through your urgings.

In a neat paradox appropriate to the sometimes fraught *philia* between the urbane Greek hero and the devotees of Dionysos, Odysseus looks to these creatures as a source of courage in the very moment of their most blatant cowardice.

While the last choral song (656–62) has presented scholars with various problems metrically (Seaford (1984) *ad loc*.; Kovacs (1994) 157), its general tenor as an exuberant cry for vengeance is clear. The satyrs remind us again of Polyphemos' crimes (658) and call for the blinding of the monster with a string of imperatives in asyndeton (i.e., without conjunctions), which ancient critics regarded as a technique to add vividness (Demetrios, *Eloc*. 269–71, ps. Longinus, *On the Sublime* 20); they also sing in dochmiacs, a meter often associated with particularly emotive utterances (656–7, 661). The blinded monster's appearance and recognition of his own situation is something of a farce (663–709), in which the satyrs taunt their longtime tormentor with the famous Homeric trick of "Nobody" (672–3). The scene may also be considered as playfully invoking tragic norms ("paratragic") in being comparable to another Euripidean drama in which a blinded figure gropes around savagely to get back at his tormentors, such as Polymestor in *Hecuba* (1035–43, 1056–1126).

But there is nothing to suggest we should pity Polyphemos any more than any other satyric villain. Odysseus reminds the Cyclops and the audience of the crimes committed by the monster (693–5):

> You were bound to pay the penalty for your unholy feast. For a worthless thing it would have been for me to destroy Troy by fire, if I had not avenged the slaughter of my companions! [695]

Here Odysseus reiterates the impiety of the monster's crimes and the importance of *philia* as a motivating factor: indeed, avenging the murder of his companions even trumps his great triumph at Troy. This simple ethic of punishing wrongdoers occurs in other satyr dramas (cf. Aeschylus, "Dike Drama" fr. 281a) and is emblematic of the great satyric heroes such as Theseus (Euripides, *Sciron* fr. 678) and Heracles (Euripides, *Syleus* fr. 692). Again, *philia* is implicitly involved here as the punitive justice meted out to the ogre of piece is the direct corollary of "helping friends and harming enemies" typical of early Greek ethical thinking (Blundell (1989) 1–25; Goins (1991)). In this case it is almost literally an "eye for an eye" enacted by Odysseus and his final taunt "go to hell" (κλαίειν σ' ἄνωγα: 701) directly recalls the monster's dismissal of Odysseus' pleas to observe the law of hospitality (κλαίειν ἄνωγα: 340). Polyphemos' continued threats and prophecy about Odysseus' wanderings hardly mar the generally upbeat, if rather abrupt, ending of the play (703–7), spoken by the Chorus (708–9):

> CH: Well anyway, we're going to be fellow sailors with Odysseus here and from now on we'll be the slaves of the Bacchic god!

This couplet alludes to many important themes in the drama: friendship, slavery, the different master the satyrs have served, their release and reunification with their god. The satyrs' self professed status as Odysseus' fellow sailors is another nod to the *philia* they share with these Greeks. Paradoxically, the idea of slavery that had defined the satyrs' condition at the outset of the play (23–6, 78–81; cf. 442, etc.) emerges at the very moment of the satyrs' freedom. But now this "slavery" is a byword for the friendship they enjoy with their god (73–5, 81, 435–6, 620–2, etc.), and stands in contrast to what they had endured under a despotic ogre living on the fringes of the Greek world.

6 *Cyclops* and Satyrs: An Overview

Recent critics have rightly drawn attention to the multifaceted aspects of satyrs whereby the ancient audience can at times identify with and at other times laugh at these followers of Dionysos, the god himself who famously blurs boundaries (Lissarague (1993); Easterling (1997) 33–44; Voelke (2001) esp. 211–59); Griffith (2002); (2005) 172–86; O'Sullivan and Collard (2013) 8–22). Many varied, if not contrasting, features inherent in the satyrs can be seen in Euripides' *Cyclops* alone. At times satyrs' the behavior manifests itself in transgressive ways such as cowardice, lechery, drunkenness (in the case of Silenos) and allround ineptitude; and such buffoonery as is amply attested also on countless Greek vases and wine cups. But in *Cyclops* the Chorus of satyrs remains always the enemies of the impious, man eating ogre Polyphemos, and even fall out with their reprobate father who sides with the

monster. They thus assert their *philia* with Odysseus and Dionysos, patron god of the festival where the drama was first performed.

Euripides' *Cyclops* depicts a potentially more serious side to these paradoxical creatures, whose ambivalence is evident elsewhere in Greek literature and thought. Plato famously has Alcibiades compare Socrates to the satyrs Marsyas and Silenos (*Symposium* 216c–217a; 221d, 222d), an image which draws on the implicit wisdom sometimes ascribed to these creatures elsewhere (e.g., Diodorus Siculus 3.58–9; Vergil, *Eclogue* 6, esp. 29–31). According to the fifthcentury poet Ion, a "satyric element" could even be considered an essential part of virtue (Plutarch *Pericles* 5.3). Others make Silenos a source of gloomy wisdom in his words to Midas that the best thing for mortals is never to have been born or to die as soon as possible (Aristotle fr. 44), a sentiment also ascribed to Homer (*Contest of Homer and Hesiod* 76–9). It appears, moreover, that satyrs were immortal, further underlining their links with their patron god (Theopompus 115 *FGH* 75c; cf. also Seaford (1984) 32; Gantz (1993) 135–9).

The identity of satyrs, then, is not so readily fixed that it can be reduced to one level of comic inversion of societal norms, even though this is certainly one of their most conspicuous features in *Cyclops*. Elements of playfulness, irony, and even pathos underscore their identity, too, and these are evident on various levels in the drama. That such paradoxical features can coexist in the satyr Chorus—the quintessential element of satyr drama—seems apt, since this medium itself was understood as a paradox in the form of a "tragedy at play" (Demetrios, *Eloc*. 169). Euripides' *Cyclops* accommodates this paradox, not least in exploring the vicissitudes of *philia*, one of many folktale motifs in the play.

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FURTHER READING

Recent decades have witnessed an intense renewal of scholarly interest in satyr drama, with major studies not only in English, but also French, German, and Italian, a trend already noticeable some years ago (Gibert (2002)). These studies have taken the form of monographs on the genre as a whole, as well as texts, translations, commentaries, and lengthy articles exploring the significance of satyr drama within its varied cultural contexts. For readers of English, the following (very select) list of works will be of value: the text and commentary R.G. Ussher (1978) is still useful, even if somewhat eclipsed by Seaford's 1984 commentary. D. Sutton (1980) offers a synoptic and often insightful overview of the genre including *Cyclops*, fragments, and a brief essay on the afterlife of satyric drama. The text and commentary of R. Seaford (1984) remains important, not least for its overall handling of satyr play and for its role in generating further scholarly interest in this dramatic form. Studies by D. Konstan (1990), F. Lissarague (1990a, 1990b, 1993) and E. Hall (1998), (2006) 14269, have interestingly discussed the role of satyrs from anthropological and genderstudies perspectives, and the major article by M. Griffith (2002) has shed light on the collective *personae* of satyrs within their dramatic tetralogies. The collection of essays edited by G. Harrison, *Satyr Drama: Tragedy at Play* (2005) includes substantial pieces on many aspects of Euripides' *Cyclops* and some of the more significant fragments (e.g., by Z. Ambrose, J. Fletcher, M. Griffith, P. O'Sullivan). The relation of satyr drama to other genres such as tragedy, comedy, and epic poetry has been the focus of recent studies by R. Hunter (2009), C. Shaw (2014) and J. Hanink (2014). The study by P. O'Sullivan and C. Collard (2013) brings *Cyclops* and major fragments of Greek satyr play together for the first time with texts, English

translations, and commentaries in one volume; it contains a wideranging introduction and includes appendices with an index of motifs and characters of the genre.

NOTES

1 Sansone (2015) has recently challenged this orthodoxy, but his claim that each satyr drama from the early fifth century onwards was the first of its tetralogy is extremely speculative.

2 An inscription known to scholars as the *Fasti* (*IG* ii^2 2318) suggests a reorganization of Attic dramatic festivals of circa 502/1 BCE (PickardCambridge (1988) 101–7; Wilson (2000) 13, 313 nn. 9–11; for full discussion of this inscription, see Millis and Olson (2012) 5–58). It is possible, then, that satyr plays may have initially been preludes to tragedies prior to this reorganization, consistent with Zenobius' claim, became fourthplaced within their tetralogy after it, then returned to being preludes by 341/40 BCE. Ultimately, however, our ignorance of the early history of satyr drama does not prevent us from understanding much about the genre even in its sparse remains.

3 NB: all references to fragments of tragedies and satyr plays come from *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* 5 vols (1971–2004) eds. B. Snell, Vol. 1 (1971^1, 1986^2); Vol. 2 (1981); S.L. Radt, Vol. 3: Aeschylus (1985); Vol. 4: Sophocles, (1977^1, 1999^2); R. Kannicht, Vol. 5.1, 5.2: Euripides (2004) Göttingen.

4 Seaford (1984) *ad loc*. accepts Diggle's daggers and sees the coupling in ὦ φίλος ὦ φίλε where the nominative is used as a vocative as problematic. But the nominative can nevertheless function as a vocative, and ὦ φίλος occurs seven times in Euripides, as Kovacs (1994) 146, notes (*Andr*. 510, 530, 1204; *Supp*. 278; *Tro*. 267, 1081; *IT* 830). For the nominative as vocative elsewhere in satyric drama, see Aesch. *Prom, Pyrk*. fr. 207; cf. also Homer, *Il*. 4.189, 21.106, etc. Also, the form Βακχει῀ε, though rare, is paralleled in Aristophanes (*Thesm*. 988).

CHAPTER 23
Rhesus

Vayos Liapis

Rhesus is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma: the variety of opinions and responses it has generated borders on the bewildering. Is it a literary atrocity by an unknown poetaster, or a genuinely Euripidean piece whose experimental features we simply fail to appreciate? Is it firmly anchored in the fifth century by virtue of its style or perceived historical relevance, or is there evidence to support a fourthcentury date? Does its large number of typically Euripidean locutions constitute evidence of authenticity, or does it merely suggest an able imitator? Is the play's predilection for turgid style and eyecatching phraseology a sign of derivativeness, or can it be attributed to a young Euripides trying to stand on his own literary feet?

A brief overview of the authenticity question will be given at the end of this chapter. We shall first give a summary of the plot, to be followed by an exploration of *Rhesus*' mythic antecedents, in light of which we shall be better placed subsequently to identify the main strands (dramaturgical, linguistic etc.) that have come together to produce this undeniably idiosyncratic play.

1 What Happens in *Rhesus*?

Time: the tenth year of the Trojan War. Place: the battlefield before the Trojan citadel, where the Trojan army and the allied contingents have bivouacked, at close quarters with the Greek camp (*Rhes*. 20–2). Like many a Greek tragedy, the play begins before dawn, though we soon realize that (unlike any other Greek tragedy we know of) it takes place almost entirely in the darkness of night, and only at the end is daybreak glimpsed (985, 992). Enter the Chorus of Trojan guards, who open the play by anxiously informing Hector, their commanderinchief, of unwonted activity in the Greek camp: the enemy may be about to flee at last. After all, we soon learn, the Greeks narrowly escaped a crushing defeat during the previous day's confrontation (56–67; cf. Homer, *Iliad* 8.497–501). Initially, the Chorus urge Hector to take immediate action, and the commander, who needs little encouragement, gets ready to launch an allout attack. At this point, the Chorus suddenly and inexplicably back off and advise caution. Hector poohpoohs what he sees as misapplied prudence.

Enter Aeneas, who makes the obvious point that a night attack would be too dangerous, and that a safer measure would be to send a spy to establish what the Greeks are up to. In response to Hector's appeal for volunteers (*Rhes*. 149–53; cf. Homer, *Iliad* 10.302–12), Dolon accepts the mission, but only in return for an appropriate reward. This turns out, after an extensive bargaining scene in which Hector's sometimes extravagant offers are rejected by Dolon one after another, to be nothing less than Achilles' splendid horses. Hector pledges to grant Dolon

his exorbitant request, thereby admitting indirectly that the spy's services are badly needed. For his infiltration of the Greek camp, Dolon explains, he will put on a wolfskin and crawl on all fours to imitate the beast's gait (201–15)—a stratagem apparently meant to come across as shrewdly original (cf. the Chorus' wideeyed curiosity at 206–7), despite its being attested in depictions of Dolon from as early as the early fifth century BCE (see further Liapis (2009a) 290–1).

In the next episode, an excited shepherd from Mt Ida enters to announce that King Rhesus of Thrace is approaching Troy at the head of a vast army (264–316). Hector, however, thinks that Rhesus' suspiciously tardy arrival is carefully calculated to allow him to reap the benefits of an easy victory without sharing in the perils of warfare. Eventually, Hector is persuaded to receive the Thracian ally (319–41), upon whose entrance ensues a lengthy exchange, in which Hector's vehement criticisms of Rhesus' delay are answered by the Thracian's elaborate explanations, capped for good measure by a fantastic proposal to launch a joint attack against Greece. The proposal summarily dismissed, Hector and the newcomers leave the stage to go to the Thracians' designated sleeping place (388–526). The Chorus leave too, having realized that it is time for them to wake up the next shift. Thus, the orchestra is left momentarily empty.

Enter Odysseus and Diomedes (565 ff.). Having set out to slay Hector, they are disheartened when they fail to find him in his sleeping place, and resolve to go back to their camp empty handed—although as it turns out, they have already intercepted and killed Dolon. At this critical juncture, the proGreek goddess Athena intervenes to change the course of the action. She points out that rather than setting their eyes on Hector, an inaccessible target, the marauders ought to devise the death of the newcomer Rhesus. As she explains, if the Thracian survives this one night he is destined to become invincible and crush the Greeks. As the two Greeks leave the stage to murder Rhesus, Alexander (Paris) enters (642 ff.): he fears that the Trojan camp has been infiltrated by Greek spies. Astonishingly, Athena assumes the appearance of Aphrodite to reassure her supposed protégé, who goes back to his bed.

As will be seen in the next section, the play up to this point is more or less a dramatization of Book 10 of Homer's *Iliad* (with a number of exceptions, notably the Alexander scene). From now on, however, the plot develops in ways for which a literary model cannot easily be identified. Rhesus' offstage murder barely over, Odysseus is seen rushing into the acting space, with the Chorus of Trojan guards hard on his heels (675 ff.). Odysseus makes a narrow escape by giving the Chorus the night's password, which he had foresightedly elicited from Dolon before murdering him. Soon enough, however, the Trojan guards realize that they may have been duped, especially when Rhesus' charioteer, heavily wounded, enters to announce that he is the only one of the Thracian contingent to survive a murderous attack by unknown marauders (756–803). Having been informed of the horrible news, Hector reenters to vent his anger on the guards for their negligence. However, he of all people should have known that the Chorus could not have been at their guard posts, for they abandoned them a while ago to inform him of the suspicious developments on the enemy camp (cf. the Chorus' response to the same effect at 820–31). Hector now has to face the Thracian charioteer's accusations of having masterminded the carnage with a view to laying hands on Rhesus' marvellous steeds. Hector defends himself, the Thracian remains unconvinced, and a standoff ensues, to be resolved

(after the charioteer has been carried off for treatment) by a Muse, Rhesus' own mother, who descends on the acting space holding her son's body in her arms (890 ff.). The Muse sets the record straight (though the charioteer is no longer there to have his suspicions authoritatively allayed): it is Athena who has caused Rhesus' death through her instruments, Odysseus and Diomedes. In the same monologue, the Muse reveals that her son's death had been predestined from the moment he set foot at Troy, and announces that Persephone will allow her son's ghost to break free from Hades and take residence in the caves of Mt Pangaeum, where he will posthumously become a prophet of Bacchus. As the play ends, the Trojans prepare to renew their onslaught against the Greeks, hoping for victory.

2 The Rhesus Myth before *Rhesus*

As intimated above, *Rhesus*' action is largely modeled on the socalled *Doloneia*, namely Book 10 of the *Iliad*, so nicknamed after the illfated Trojan spy Dolon (see further Ritchie (1964) 64–81). The *Doloneia*'s authenticity was doubted already in antiquity, and it is ironically appropriate that the author of the apocryphal *Rhesus* took it as his model. Indeed, *Rhesus* is the only surviving dramatization of a Homeric narrative, with the partial exception of the satyric *Cyclops* (for a complete discussion of the play, see the previous chapter by O'Sullivan). As far as we can ascertain, fifthcentury tragedians tended to derive their material from the epic cycle, with Homer being far less pillaged, for example by Aeschylus for his *Myrmidons*, *Nereids*, and *Phrygians*. It is in the fourth century that tragedians seem to turn to the *Iliad* as a source for dramatic material; at least this is suggested by the proliferation, in that era, of plays entitled *Achilles* and, more rarely, *Hector*.

In the *Doloneia*, which also takes place in the darkness of night, the Greek chiefs decide to entrust Odysseus and Diomedes with the task of infiltrating the Trojan bivouac to establish whether the enemy intends to take advantage of their advanced position in order to launch an attack (however, the rationale behind the mission is presented in a confusingly imprecise manner: see Fenik (1964) 40–1). After the two spies set out, and their mission receives visible indications of Athena's support, the narrative lens moves to the Trojan bivouac, where Hector offers the best Greek chariot and team of horses as a reward to anyone who would spy on the Greek camp and establish whether the enemy is minded to depart. Dolon volunteers, but only after he obtains Hector's pledge to present him specifically with Achilles' chariot and horses. Predictably, the spies cross each other's paths, and Dolon is inveigled into disclosing the locations of the allied troops, including Rhesus' newly arrived Thracian units. The Greeks (who unlike their *Rhesus* counterparts have no interest in killing Hector) slaughter Rhesus and twelve of his companions, and make off with his splendid horses. They repair to the Greek encampment, where the mood is understandably euphoric.

The similarities between *Iliad* 10 and *Rhesus* (especially its first part, up to Rhesus' murder) jump out at the reader: the nighttime action, the parallel spying missions arranged by the chieftains of the two enemy armies, Dolon's request for a splendid reward, his demise at the hands of the Greek marauders, and finally the murder of Rhesus and his company. However, there are also perceptible differences, some of them significant for the construction of meaning.

For instance, whereas in *Rhesus* it is the *Greek* watchfires that are sighted from the Trojan bivouac, in the *Iliad* (8.508–11) it is the *Trojans* who light fires throughout the plain, so that they may notice the easier any suspicious activity on the Greek side (cf. also Homer *Iliad* 10.11 f.). Moreover, the *Doloneia* has nothing comparable to the Aeneas scene in *Rhesus*—although elsewhere in the *Iliad* the comparable function of the wise adviser is fulfilled by Polydamas, who checks Hector's belligerence at a critical moment by pointing out, much as Aeneas does in *Rhesus*, that it would be impossible to cross the Greek moat (*Iliad* 12.61–79; cf. *Rhes.* 109–18; on the homology between Aeneas and Polydamas see Ritchie (1964) 66; Fantuzzi (2006) 256–9). Further, Dolon in the *Iliad* is little more than a laughable poltroon: when apprehended by the Greek spies, he is affected by panic, his teeth chatter, his complexion turns pale, he sheds tears of despondency, and pleads wretchedly for his life (*Il.* 10.374–81, 390; cf. Hainsworth (1993) on *Il.* 10.316). These features are entirely absent from *Rhesus*, where the Chorus admire Dolon's pluck (242–52) and crafty inventiveness (206). Even Dolon's murder at the hands of the Greeks is hinted at in the vaguest terms in *Rhesus* (525–6, 557–8, 863–5), perhaps in an attempt not to detract from his newfangled image as a resourceful, battlehardened warrior; this is a far cry from the *Doloneia* where Dolon's slaughter is described in grisly detail (*Il.* 10.454–9; on Dolon's rehabilitated image in *Rhesus* see further Liapis (2009b) 200; cf. Liapis (2012) on *Rh.* 149–53, 154–5, 161–80, 164–5, 219–23).

Divergences between *Rhesus* and the *Doloneia* become even more palpable in the latter part of the play. When the Greek spies are at a loss after failing to find Hector, Athena intervenes in person to redirect them against a more appropriate target, namely Rhesus (595 ff.), who as the audience have already been informed would be able to crush the Greeks in the space of a single day (447–50). This detail goes back to a different, no doubt preIliadic (cf. Fenik (1964) 36–7) version of the Rhesus myth, which ancient sources tell us was mentioned in Pindar (fr. 262 SnellMaehler = scholium bT to *Iliad* 10.435, III.93 Erbse). In the "Pindar" version, Rhesus' military triumph on a single day (presumably the day of his arrival at Troy) was finally brought to an end by Hera and Athena, who arranged for the Thracian king to be murdered by Odysseus and Diomedes. Indeed, Athena herself may have descended on earth to assist her Greek protégés (cf. scholium A to *Il.* 10.435, I.364.7–9 Dindorf).

Yet another version of the Rhesus myth—one which, again, has no counterpart in the *Iliad*—is reflected in Athena's warning (598–605) that Rhesus will become unstoppable if only he survives this one night. In that version, which is transmitted in the ancient scholium A to the *Iliad* 10.435 (I. 364.11–15 Dindorf), there was an oracle to the effect that Troy's (or specifically the river Scamander's) water would make Rhesus indestructible; thus, he had to be killed—as indeed he was—before he or, according to a variant, his horses could taste of the water (cf. also Verg. *Aen.* 1.469–73). By weaving both the "Pindar" and the "oracle" versions into his play, the author of *Rhesus* has maladroitly combined two variants of the myth that turn out, upon closer inspection, to be incompatible with each other. The "Pindar" version requires Rhesus to fight for one day, whereas in the "oracle" version it is essential that he be killed before even entering the fight. Moreover, the author of *Rhesus* has retained from the "Pindar" version Athena's crucial role in guiding the Greeks to Rhesus' sleeping place—a role

performed by Dolon in the *Doloneia* (*Il.* 10.426–45). However, having chosen Athena over Dolon as the key helper, the *Rhesus* author failed to take the obvious step of reducing Dolon's prominence accordingly; as a result, Dolon's role in *Rhesus* comes across as dramatically redundant, since all essential information regarding Rhesus is imparted by Athena—and with good reason too, seeing that Dolon leaves the stage before the news of Rhesus' arrival even comes through (on this glaring mismanagement of mythic sources see further Fenik (1964) 6–26, esp. 17–19, 23–6; Liapis (2009a) 279–82 and (2012) xlii).

3 Stagecraft and Dramaturgy: Accomplishments and Failures

Whoever wrote *Rhesus* was almost certainly an experienced man of the theater (cf. Fraenkel (1965) 239). He shows considerable skill in constructing the play's mental landscape, its imaginary topography so to speak, and in assigning theatrical meaning to the performance space by means of implicit "stage directions" embedded in the script. By means of such "verbal semeiosis" the audience are directed to think of one of the sideentrances as leading to the Trojan and, further on, to the Greek camp; likewise, the opposite sideentrance is construed as giving access to Mt Ida, to the city of Troy, and to what is to be the bivouac of Rhesus' Thracian army (see esp. Battezzato (2000) 367–9; cf. Liapis (2012) xxxvi–xxxviii).

The author has a distinct predilection for stagecraft novelties, a proclivity especially evident in what is perhaps the play's most salient feature, namely its nighttime action. The impression of surrounding darkness would be hard to convey in the openair theater where *Rhesus* must have been produced, and yet the author succeeds in insinuating and sustaining the illusion by means of persistent verbal reminders (e.g. 1, 2, 5, 8–9, 13, 25, 42, 55, 66, 111, 223, 289, 331, 518, 528–55, 570–1, 615, 678–9, 697, 736, 774, 824; see further Compagno (1963/4) 249–56; Ritchie (1964) 135–7; Burlando (1997) 11–16, Jouan (2004) xxxviii–xl; Fantuzzi (1990) 26–7). A penchant for theatrical sensationalism (cf. Burnett (1985) 13; Poe (2004) 25, 32) is more palpably manifested in the splendid scene of Rhesus' chariotentry (380–7), which has been prepared for by the shepherd's openmouthed description of the magnificent vehicle (301–8). The chariotentry, accompanied no doubt by a considerable retinue (of which, however, there is no indication in the text), renders into a visually concrete form the prominent theme of Rhesus' marvellous horses, which we know are coveted both by Dolon and by Hector (182–90, cf. 835–40) and which are the prize Odysseus and Diomedes will carry off after their murder of Rhesus (see Taplin (1977) 77, as against WilamowitzMoellendorff (1926) 286–7 = (1962) 414).

There are more pieces of theatrical virtuosity in *Rhesus*. For instance, the momentarily empty stage just before Odysseus' and Diomedes' entrance at 565 (for they must not collide with the Chorus exiting by the same sideentrance at 562–4) is highly unusual, and probably all the more efficient for that (see further next paragraph). Likewise, the Trojan Chorus' sudden bursting into the orchestra, in hot pursuit of the fleeing Odysseus (675 ff.), must have been visually stunning, as well as fraught with unmistakable comic nuances; especially the repeated

injunctions “strike, strike, strike [him]; batter, batter, batter [him],” with their threat of impending stage violence, recall Aristophanes’ *Acharnians* 281–3 (cf. Poe (2004) 24).

Actors’ entrances and exits are also carefully handled, and a potential difficulty involved here turns out to be only apparent. At 565 Odysseus and Diomedes must enter by the same side entrance as that used by the Chorus for their exit immediately before (562–4); since the two enemy parties must not meet, the Greeks’ entrance must be somewhat delayed; as a result, the stage will be momentarily empty. Despite the embarrassment this brief hiatus has caused some critics (e.g. Wiles (1997) 156–8; Battezzato (2000) 368–9 with n. 13; Kovacs (2002) 410 n. 16), the empty performance space is actually a very effective means of creating a dramatically pregnant silence, moments before the play’s final catastrophe is triggered. After a brief spell of immobility, we watch the two Greeks sneak into the orchestra, and we instantly know they are Rhesus’ future murderers (“Diomedes” is, after all, the very first word we hear from them, 565). A performance area, to quote Peter Brook’s famous formulation, is by definition an “empty space” waiting to be filled with visual and aural stimuli; a theater stage that is empty of motion and sound is bound to produce an unsettling, even eerie effect (cf. Liapis (2012) xxxvii–xxxviii).

For all his skill, however, the author of *Rhesus* has not managed to avoid a number of rather obvious pitfalls, mainly because of his undisciplined proclivity for the innovative and the spectacular. At the outset of the play, for instance, the Chorus of Trojan guards, all aflutter, rush into the acting area urging Hector to take immediate military action against what they suspect to be a Greek attempt at a surreptitious escape from Troy (23 ff.). However, as soon as Hector decides to launch a massive night attack, the Chorus make a startling aboutface, which is as jarring as it is dramatically unmotivated: “Hector,” they point out, “you make haste before you understand what is going on; for we do not know for sure if the men are indeed about to flee” (76–7). Hector is not prepared to share his soldiers’ cautiousness, and it will soon transpire that Aeneas (87 ff.) is better qualified to change Hector’s mind on this issue. So why bother to introduce a panting Chorus issuing anxious warnings only to have them incongruously advise circumspection a few lines later—a piece of advice that will be ignored anyway? The answer is probably that the author could not resist the temptation of the vivid if shortlived theatrical excitement a scampering, babbling Chorus (cf. Hector’s “you’re talking a lot, but you’re not making much sense,” 39–40) would create, especially at the play’s opening scene. Their recommendations for prudence are introduced hastily, almost as an afterthought, because Hector must remain on stage for dramaturgical reasons: he is to dispatch Dolon (154 ff.), hear the news of Rhesus’ arrival (264 ff.), and receive Rhesus himself (388 ff.).

Perhaps the most blatant of the play’s dramaturgical idiosyncrasies is the notorious “Alexander scene” (642–74), in which Alexander (Paris) is introduced for a brief 23 lines. As we saw above, the ostensible purpose of his appearance is to warn Hector that the security of the Trojan bivouac may have been compromised; he is, however, reassured by Athena, who disguises herself as Aphrodite, Alexander’s patron goddess. This is an odd episode on many accounts. First of all, it is dramaturgically pointless: misled by Athena/“Aphrodite,” Alexander goes back to sleep without notifying Hector, who is not there to be notified in the first place, since he has left to show Rhesus his sleeping quarters (518–22). Moreover, the

transformation, whether enacted on stage or not, of a divinity into another divinity (rather than into a mortal) is unparalleled in serious Greek literature; even in comedy, the only known exception is a comedy by Amphis (fr. 46 Kassel/Austin), in which Zeus disguised himself as Artemis, the easier to approach and rape Callisto (cf. Geffcken (1936) 4–5 with n. 10; Henrichs (1987) 262 with n. 82). And at any rate, it is highly unlikely that a fifthcentury Athenian audience would have unproblematically accepted that their patron goddess, a perennial virgin, could ever appear under the guise of the goddess of sexual desire (cf. Fraenkel (1965) 240). Significantly, even the Athenian comic poets, who had otherwise few compunctions about deriding the gods, never dared to touch their city's tutelary deity. It appears that this bizarre scene has been inserted merely for the cheap thrill of enacting precisely this unheardof transformation of one goddess into another (cf. Pearson (1921) 59; WilamowitzMoellendorff (1926) 287 = (1962) 414; Liapis (2012) xxxviii–xl).

That the Alexander scene had little more than mere noveltyseeking to suggest it is further indicated by yet another unusual feature: it can only be staged by the use of a fourth actor (customarily, fifthcentury tragedians employed only three actors). Now, many scholars have argued that the scene can be performed with only three actors, assuming that "Odysseus," who had left at 626, reentered as "Alexander" at 641, i.e. after sixteen lines at most, then left at 664 only to reappear as "Odysseus" at 674, i.e. after a maximum of eleven lines (for doxography see Ritchie (1964) 127 n. 1; Battezzato (2000) 367 n. 1). However, if the same actor was to appear first as Odysseus, then as Alexander, then again as Odysseus in the space of 27 lines, a number of stagehands would have to be involved in very dexterous, very precise backstage coordination, and the actor would have to display extreme physical effort and skill. It is doubtful that this level of flawless synchronization was possible in the large ancient theater, although we know it was in the much more intimate space of a modern theater where a threeactor production of *Rhesus* took place some years ago (Marshall (2002)). Even if such a feat of practical adroitness were possible, however, it would still be pointless and unadvisable from a producer's point of view. For by gratuitously introducing the need for perfect, hitchfree coordination between actor and stagehands, this arrangement would recklessly open up the performance to more numerous, more precarious, and more unpredictable contingencies than those involved in a regular, runofthemill staging of any given play. There is no reason why a professional playwright would want to encumber his production with more technical difficulties (and, consequently, with greater margin for error) than those he would have to deal with anyway—especially since, as we saw, the Alexander scene is anything but essential for the plot. It seems preferable to assume that the scene was introduced for the additional attraction of breaking free from convention by adding a fourth actor, that is to say by eliciting a more lavish subsidy from whoever was sponsoring the performance. (For yet another fault of plotconstruction see the end of section 2 above).

4 Language and Style: A Derivative Play

Whoever wrote *Rhesus* was grandiloquent to a fault, and striving after verbosity and *recherché* language, presumably in a misguided effort to produce lofty tragic style. For one thing, the play

is rife with words that either are found nowhere else in Greek literature or in Greek tragedy. The technical term for such elements is *hapax* words; the former kind may be further specified as *hapax eirēmena*, or "words found only once," while the latter as *hapax tragōidoumena*, or "words found only once in tragedy." The two scholars who primarily discussed such words were Eysert ((1891) 18–19) and Ritchie ((1964) 150–6), and both of them wished to dismiss the value of *hapax* words as evidence against the play's authenticity by pointing out that their ratio in *Rhesus* is not significantly higher than in the rest of the Euripidean corpus. However, aside from the fact that *Rhesus* does have, if by a short margin, the highest percentage of *hapax* words among extant Euripidean plays, Eysert and Ritchie missed an important point: on the one hand, *hapax* usages are more frequent in Euripides' *later* plays; on the other, the metrical rigor of the play's iambic trimeters (the poet avoids substituting two short syllables for one long) bespeaks a very *early* date in the Euripidean corpus (see further Ritchie (1964) 260–73, 358). In other words, *Rhesus* would have to be an early play on account of its metrics, but a late play on account of its ratio of rare words—a contradiction suggesting that the question of *Rhesus*' authenticity cannot be decided on the strength of a single criterion (see the nextbutone paragraph).

The observation that *Rhesus*' predilection for linguistic rarities is consistent with developments in Euripides' later dramas is further confirmed by the play's tendency to appropriate characteristic usages (not necessarily *hapax*es) found in Euripides' post420 BC plays—*Orestes*, *Hercules*, *Phoenissae*, *Troades*, *Electra*, and the fragmentary *Erectheus*. Consider, for instance, *Rhesus* 122 (< *Orestes* 1568), 209 (< *Hercules* 363), 333/412 (< *Phoenissae* 1432); 606 (< *Troades* 562–4); 791 (< *Electra* 843); 916 (< *Erectheus* fr. 370.60 Kannicht). There is even one case in which the *Rhesus* author has appropriated an entire part of a choral song from Euripides' *Phaethon*, a play probably to be dated to the period circa 420–15 (*Rhes*. 527–37, 546–56 ~ Eur. *Phaethon* 63 ff. Diggle = fr. 773.19 ff. Kannicht). (For the imitation here see further Liapis (2012) *ad* 527–64n. and (2014) 280–2.)

That *Rhesus* can combine elements characteristic of late Euripides with features (such as the strict treatment of the iambic trimeter) associated with early Euripides can only mean that *Rhesus* is the derivative concoction of a later imitator. Writing at an era in which fifthcentury tragedy, and Euripides in particular, had acquired "classic" status, the *Rhesus* author was naturally drawn to what he must have felt to be an incontestable model of tragic style. In doing so, he (perhaps unavoidably) felt free to adopt whichever features of Euripidean tragedy suited him, with little concern for consistently reproducing Euripidean or tragic style of a particular period. His primary purpose, it seems, was not to pass himself off as Euripides, or as any other classic dramatist for that matter, but to produce a work evocative of the manner of old masters. Clearly, however, he overplayed his hand, and ended up cramming too much into his short drama (*Rhesus* is the shortest surviving tragedy) by way of pompous language or tragic imitation. That a large portion of *Rhesus*' linguistic curiosities can be paralleled elsewhere in tragedy, and in Euripides specifically, is no argument in favor of authenticity (despite e.g. Albert (1876) 33–40 and others after him). The point is precisely that, while most of these peculiarities can be paralleled individually, their excessive accumulation in this briefest of all surviving tragedies is quite unprecedented in fifthcentury tragedy; indeed, the closest parallel

for such a haphazard assembly of verbal pyrotechnics is to be found in interpolated passages of tragedy, which in all likelihood are the work of fourthcentury producers or actors (see further Fraenkel (1965) 231–3).

The author's excessive taste for the exotic and the recondite, especially in matters of style, sometimes leads him to employ or to invent spectacular turns of phrase that are evidently meant to impress but turn out upon closer inspection to be no more than overblown or downright faulty Greek. When for instance the sleeping Hector is enjoined to "loosen the fierce fixity of [his] eyes" (*luson blepharōn gorgōpon hedran*, *Rhes.* 8), we cannot but wonder by what feat of linguistic licence the author has managed to reinvent a phrase that seems to have held precisely the opposite meaning (in Sophocles' *Antigone* 1302 *luei blephara* means "closes her eyes"), not to mention that Hector's sleepy eyes can hardly be *gorgōpon*, an epithet reserved elsewhere in Euripides for a ferocious look (*HF* 131–2, 868, 1266; *Ion* 210; frag. 754a.3 Kannicht). Elsewhere, the author goes even as far as to make up obscure turns of phrase, such as *nuktos en katastasei* (111), an expression which apparently means something like "at dead of night," although the meaning is impossible to extract out of a word (*katastasis*) which ought to mean "set form," "settled condition" (i.e. normal state), "present, current situation" (cf. Fraenkel (1965) 237, as against Ritchie (1964) 214). As a final, and particularly noteworthy example I cite 363–4 *kulikōn oinoplanētois | epidexiois hamillais*, which seems to mean something like "the contest of wine cups wandering ever to the right." The bombastic phrase evidently refers to the custom of passing the drinking cup from one symposiast to the guest sitting to his right; but it is overloaded, and the baroque *oinoplanētois* (literally, "wine wandering") is extremely hard both to parallel and to make sense of.

5 Did Euripides Write the *Rhesus* we Have?

As will be obvious by now, I believe it is relatively safe to answer the above question in the negative. The awkward treatment of mythic sources (see end of section 2 above), the flaws in plotconstruction and dramaturgy (see section 3 above), the verbosity, the ornate but faulty style, and the crammingtogether, hotchpotchlike, of purple patches from classical literature (cf. section 4 above)—all of this is so far removed from what we know of Euripides' usual manner that one wonders how on earth it was ever possible to associate *Rhesus* with him. In this respect, I fully endorse the following appraisal of the play by an eminent Euripidean scholar in an earlier *Blackwell Companion*:

> The unknown author had a fair though erratic grasp of tragic style, but his ability to develop action and characters was limited (the blustering Hector and Rhesus are unengaging as tragic figures), and he seems to have been preoccupied with creating a series of novel episodes which often digress into sterile debates—Hector arguing with Aeneas about strategy, with Rhesus about Rhesus' failure to show up earlier, with the charioteer about the Trojans' responsibility for Rhesus' death, and so on. It would be unfair to take this moderately competent and derivative work as representing the best that fourthcentury tragedians could do.
>
> (Cropp 2005: 288)

"Fourthcentury tragedians": indeed, it seems a reasonable assumption that *Rhesus* was produced sometime in the fourth century BC—an assumption put forth as early as the mid eigthteenth century (Hardion (1741) 527–30) and subsequently argued for in various forms by scholars (e.g. Hagenbach (1863) 61–3, Wilamowitz (1895) 22, 41 with n. 81 and (1926) 284–5 = (1962) 412, Ebener (1966) 18–20, and in the last instance Liapis (2009c) and (2012) lxxi–lxxii, and Fries (2014) 24–8; for a recent case against a fourthcentury date see, however, Thum 2005). Apart from its generally derivative character, *Rhesus*' language and style seem more compatible with fourthcentury usage. For instance, the abundance of *eutukhēs* and its cognates (*Rhes*. 56, 60, 64, 319, 390, 583, 649, 882) is highly untypical of Euripides, who prefers *eudaimōn* or *olbios*, but consistent with similar usages in another fourthcentury play, namely Menander's *Dyskolos* (see McDonald (1978) 309–10). Likewise, *ankhitermōn* (426) is found only once in classical tragedy (Soph. fr. 384 Radt) but more frequently attested among fourth and thirdcentury tragedians, such as Theodectas (*TrGF* 1, 72 F 17.1) and Lycophron (*Alexandra* 729, 1130).

Further, a small number of peculiarities in stagecraft and metrical structure seem to bespeak, again, a fourthcentury author. A case in point with regard the former is Rhesus' spectacular chariot entry (*Rhes*. 380–7) (cf. p. 339 above). Chariot entries are entirely absent from Sophocles and very sparse in Euripides, but Taplin (1977) 77 has argued in favor of their renewed popularity in the fourth century. With regard to metrical structure, one need look no further than the exchange between the Chorus and an actor at the play's outset, where the Chorus chants in excited anapaests and Hector responds in measured iambics. A Chorus' opening anapaests are consistent both with Aeschylean practice, for example in *Persae* and *Supplices*, in which case the *Rhesus* author may be reproducing an "archaic" style (cf. Kranz (1933) 263–4, 19–20), and with the early style of Euripides' choral entrancesongs (Ritchie (1964) 341–4). However, the Chorus' anapaests soon evolve into an alternating structure, as they are balanced by Hector's iambic responses; and this alternation between anapaests and iambics is most closely paralleled in the heavily interpolated prologue of *Iphigeneia in Aulis* (1–48, 115–162), in the dialogue between Agamemnon and the Old Man (on the *Iphigeneia* prologue having been interpolated in (among else) the fourth century BC see most recently Kovacs (2003) 80–3).

There are no compelling internal arguments against an even later date, for instance the third century BC; indeed, as illustrious a scholar as G. Hermann (1828) argued that *Rhesus* may well be a Hellenistic tragedy. Still, it is highly unlikely that so late a play could have wormed its way into the canon of genuine Euripidean plays, especially since already at an early stage of the Hellenistic era Alexandrian editors had largely established what was authentic and what not in the corpus of tragic texts. As to how a spurious *Rhesus* could have inserted itself into the Euripidean corpus, we may speculate (cf. Liapis (2009c) 82–8) that the genuine Euripidean play was lost at an early date, and the surviving *Rhesus*, which was the only play of that name to reach Alexandria, was mistaken for the real thing, especially since the *Didascaliae* (records of ancient theater productions) already mentioned a *Rhesus* by Euripides.

All in all, *Rhesus* is in all likelihood the only fully surviving tragedy from what must have been a theatrically vibrant century. Its idiosyncrasies are legion, and although it has its brilliant

moments, they hardly make up for its deficiencies. It may have been conceived for performance outside Athens, possibly in Macedon (Liapis (2009c); *contra* Fries (2014) 18–21), in which case it would be an even greater rarity of a play. Still, one would rather have a complete (if less eccentric) play by an Astydamas or a Theodectas than this unremarkable concoction by a minor figure.

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FURTHER READING

For a recent concise introduction to *Rhesus* see Hall (2010) 294–8. The long and complicated debate on the authenticity of *Rhesus* cannot be summarized here. For (relatively) recent overviews of the controversy see for example Cataudella (1969) 324–8, 333–92 (thorough and helpful); Burlando (1997) 105–27, 129–60; Jouan (2004) x–xv. For the most meticulous attempt to defend Euripidean authorship, as well as for a comprehensive discussion of major aspects of the play and of important earlier views, see Ritchie 1964 (summary in pp. 345–61); for decisive counterarguments see however Fraenkel (1965). The play's numerous idiosyncrasies—some of which are intelligently reviewed by Kitto (1977) and Poe (2004)—are explained away by Burnett (1985) who speculates that *Rhesus* was an oneoff experiment with the possibilities of a hybrid tragicomic genre; this notion, unlikely in itself, sits very oddly with the play's final scene of protracted lamentation and genuine grief. On *Rhesus*' handling of earlier myth in epic and lyric poetry as well as in art see Fenik (1964); Liapis (2009a). On an important issue of theater production see Battezzato (2000), who shows that *Rhesus* could only have been performed with four actors.

After a long period of neglect, Rhesus has recently had two fullscale commentaries in English devoted to it: see Liapis (2012) and Fries (2014). A third commentary by M. Fantuzzi is in preparation. Earlier commentaries are mostly unsatisfactory: Paley (1872), though still useful, focuses mainly on narrowly textual and linguistic matters; Porter (1929) is sensible but exceedingly sparse; and Feickert (2005) is recent, exhaustive, and occasionally useful but

prolix and marred by errors of fact and judgement.

CHAPTER 24
Fragments and Fragmentary Plays

Christopher Collard

Since the year 2000 collected editions of Euripides' fragmentary remains have at last opened them to full access and appreciation. This chapter traces that development, describing their nature, problems, and rewards, and ending with illustrative casestudies from fragmentary plays.

Note: throughout, "F" denotes a remnant from a playtext itself, however brief, which counts as primary evidence (e.g. *Danae* F 314.2); secondary evidence is denoted either by "T," any ancient literary, documentary, or artistic evidence for the poet and his work (e.g. T 6, a list of plays), or by "test(imonium)," any such evidence for a play, plot, characters, content, issues, and performance (e.g. *Ixion* test. iii, about this wrongdoer apparently nailed to his wheel on stage). A single asterisk before F or test. indicates conjectural attribution to a particular play, a double one just to Euripides. These symbols, standardized by Snell–Radt–Kannicht (1971–2004), are used throughout this chapter.

1 A Few Facts and Figures

Ancient records counted and listed known plays; modern scholars have discovered further secondary evidence to verify, refine, or supplement those numbers and names.

Comparative and approximate but acceptable figures are: Aeschylus about 520 textfragments from 73 known plays (seven survive complete), Sophocles 1140 from 107 (seven complete), Euripides 1220 from 78 (18 complete). These data are however misleading, because the great majority of Aeschylus' and Sophocles' fragments are brief, with a very few verses or words, while a quite large proportion of Euripides' are generally longer, and some, recovered on papyrus, are extensive. Better illustrative comparisons lie: (i) in the number of pages of the recent Loeb editions (Sommerstein 2008, LloydJones 1996, Collard and Cropp 2008), which were prepared on the same editorial principles: Aeschylus 376, Sophocles 434, Euripides 1390; (ii) in the number of plays for which primary and secondary evidence permit largely safe reconstruction of more than an outline plot: Aeschylus 4, Sophocles 4, Euripides about 25 (see List in section 4).

2 The Nature of the Evidence and how it has Survived

The primary evidence, the playfragments themselves (F), survives in a hierarchy of textual authority:

i. Remnants from originally complete playtexts preserved, but often much damaged, upon papyrus or (seldom) parchment. They date from the third century BCE onwards (e.g.

Erechtheus F 370) to about 500 CE (e.g. *Phaethon* F 772a–781), and range from very short pieces to hundreds of lines (e.g. *Hypsipyle* F 752b–759b are from a single papyrus). Papyri are listed by Kannicht (2004a) 1064–6; there are general and playcentered essays in Bastianini and Casanova (2005);

ii. Longish playexcerpts copied in antiquity itself, for anthological, educational, or individual purposes, for example the markedly pictorial *parodos* of *Phaethon*, F 773.63–101, third century BCE (this is overlapped by the much later continuous text named in (i) above);

ii. Shorter quotations, cited by other ancient writers, chosen for their poetic, linguistic, gnomic, or generally evidential content. Such writers include "literary" ones like comic dramatists, orators, philosophers, historians, prosewriters, and anthologists at large, and "academic" ones like commentators (not least scholiasts on Euripides himself), lexicographers, and encyclopaedists. They range in date from Euripides' contemporary Aristophanes (who often interweaves direct quotation with parodic imitation: distinction can be problematic) to Byzantine authors and compilers of the tenth to twelfth centuries (e.g. the *Suda*lexicon, Johannes Logothetes). These quotations are collectively called "bookfragments"; their textual quality varies hugely, and it is often hard to judge whether their wording has been deliberately altered, or stems from faulty copying or faulty memory.

Secondary evidence (T or test.) comes in five broad categories:

iv. Documentary: playlists both inscriptional (e.g. T 6, second century BCE) and documentary (e.g. T 8, a secondcentury CE papyrus). Official "firstperformance" records from Athens were copied by Aristophanes of Byzantium for the *hypotheseis* ("playintroductions") included in his editions of tragedy about 200 BCE (T 63, 64); they survive, sometimes adapted, only for a few complete plays; one or two nevertheless name the now fragmentary plays first performed with those (e.g. *Palamedes* test. ii a, b; cf. p. 357). These *hypotheseis* provide most of our sure datings (see List in section 4 below), and one or two contain other important information (e.g. about the morally objectionable content of *Hippolytus Veiled*, test. i). For *hypotheseis* see Zuntz (1963) 129–46; for many on papyri see van RossumSteenbeck (1998).

v. The approximate 25 socalled "narrative" *hypotheseis* (or plotsummaries) are different. They stem from a supposed collection made about 100 CE, but falsely dated in antiquity to about 300 BCE, and known to scholars as "Tales from Euripides" (there are only two or three comparable *hypotheseis* each for Aeschylus and Sophocles). They survive with varying completeness in papyri (all from the first to fourth century CE), or were transcribed, edited, and expanded by later writers (e.g. *Melanippe Wise* test. i, eleventh century CE), or paraphrased or adapted, especially by mythographers, who sometimes name Euripides (e.g. *Ino* test. iii, Hyginus, *Fables* 4: see p. 356) or are confidently judged to have drawn on playsummaries (e.g. *Phrixus* A test. ii b, [Apollod.], *Bibl.* 1. 9. 11). The plots of *Auge* (test. ii b) and *Daughters of Pelias* (test. iii b) are known only from Armenian translations of Greek summaries by Moses of Chorene of about 700 CE.

vi. A large category, so diverse that illustration must be perfunctory, attests or reflects Euripidean content, manner and, sometimes, wording very closely: parodies, particularly by Aristophanes ((ii) above, e.g. *Ach.* 383–446 of *Telephus*, test. iv a; for paratragedy see especially Rau (1967)); translations or nearcertain adaptations by Latin dramatists (now themselves fragmentary: for example 15 fragments of Pacuvius' play, *Antiope* test. viib) or poets (e.g. Ov. *Her.* 11 reworks Canace's story from *Aeolus*: test. vii b); paraphrases (often including textfragments) with comments (e.g. the satyric *Syleus*: Philo ("of Judaea"), *Every good man is free* 98–104 = test. iii b, F 687–91; cf. on *Philoctetes* see Section 5 end).

ii. Scraps of information and remarks of varying length and importance (and reliability) occur in a very wide range of ancient authors ((iii) above, and again especially commentators on Euripides himself (e.g. the *scholia* on Eur. *Hipp.* 58 tell us of secondary Choruses in *Alexander* (test. v) and *Antiope* (test. v)).

ii. Artistic representations of mythical incidents tempt association with playplots known or hypothesized from evidence both primary and secondary. For Euripides the attraction is understandable and meretricious: many such vasepaintings come from the Athens of his own lifetime; but a much larger number date from the later fourth and early third centuries, the period of his greatest popularity in revived performances, above all in southern Italy (see Taplin (1993) and (2007)). Sometimes art "survives" only in written attestation, for example The *Palatine Anthology* 3.10 describes a sculptural relief of the second century BCE from Asia Minor which shows Hypsipyle's sons proving their identity to their mother through a recognitiontoken (*Hypsipyle* test. iv), a moment for which the fragmentary playtext gives only insecure support (F 759a. 1632).

3 Collecting, Editing, and Studying the Fragments

Collecting. The largest Greek anthology to survive antiquity, primarily gnomological and including both prose and verse, is that of Stobaeus (fifth century CE). It was the source for a few brief gnomologies from Euripides printed in the mid to late sixteenth century, and the sole source for the first general (but still morally intentioned) poetic anthology, of Grotius (1623). Yet from the 1560s the Flemish brothers Willem and Dirk Canter had begun systematically collecting poetic and especially dramatic fragments, excerpting Stobaeus and combing a wide range of ancient authors and scholarly repositories. After Willem's early death Dirk continued working and before his own death in 1617 entrusted his collections to a friend in the hope of publication. They were made available to Grotius for his expanded anthology (1626), but remained unpublished, seldom even mentioned, let alone used, until rediscovered in part in the 1980s. The "Euripides," in three volumes, is in the Bodleian Library Oxford, and was fully examined by Kannicht ((2004a) 9). See Canter (after 1560); Gruys ((1981) 277–309); Kannicht ((1997) 72–5); Collard ((2007) 193–212).

Editing. The Canters' extraordinarily ambitious enterprise anticipated much later good practice in recovering, documenting, editing, annotating, and evaluating fragments. The next

Euripidean collection was proposed by Richard Bentley, in the 1690s; he did not take it very far, but knowledge of it prompted his Cambridge contemporary Joshua Barnes to add the fragments to his *Euripides* of 1694. Barnes's collection was unscholarly, and almost wholly transcribed from Grotius' two volumes. The first edition of the fragments to show sound method was that of Musgrave (1778); his collection was utilized and a little expanded by Matthiae (1829); both Dindorf (1831[1], 1869[5]) and Wagner (1844) drew heavily on Matthiae. All earlier editorial work upon tragic fragments and their sources was brought together by Nauck (1889[2]; supplementary matter, 1892). His single volume stood without challenge for a whole century; one reason for its longevity was that it came out just as the very first papyri were being published, and represented the fullest collection of bookfragments practicable at the time. The successorvolume to Nauck, Kannicht (2004a), supplemented the book fragments substantially; more important, it at last brought together all known papyri, mostly reedited from their very scattered first editions and occasional partcollections. Van Looy and Jouan (1998–2003) had already finished their Budé *Euripides* before Kannicht published (2004a), but had enjoyed his help and Collard, Cropp, Lee, and Gibert (1995, 2004) and Collard and Cropp (2008) were able to utilize both to the full.

General study. Much work upon the fragments has always been conducted in journals or incidentally elsewhere, since Meursius (1619). The first detailed treatments of some single plays were by Valckenaer (1767). Then came appreciative but often adventurous reconstructions by Welcker (1839–41) and overbold ones by Hartung (1843–4). In the late nineteenth century the bookfragments were as subject to rash textual "improvement" as the complete plays; but the exact and brilliant studies of Wilamowitz commanded admiration throughout his long career. He began with *Analecta* (1875), which broke methodological ground in its verification of playtitles and its demonstration how to handle and reconstruct fragmentary plays.

In the twentiethcentury annotated editions of individual plays at last became practicable, usually following important papyrus finds and usually equipped with substantial introductory essays debating reconstruction. In contrast with European and particularly German scholars, Anglophones were slow to consider the importance of fragments to appreciating Euripides' whole *oeuvre*. Before the advent of papyri Campbell ((1891) 265) could write "The fragments of the tragic poets are naturally disappointing"; he was typical in his attitude but untypical in treating fragments at all. Murray was however an early advocate of their importance (1902[1]). Norwood (1920[1]) mentioned many in passing, and dealt with a few in more detail (pp. 295–310). As late as 1939, however, Kitto's *Greek Tragedy* named not a single fragmentary play in its index, and Grube (1941) did not mention them as a topic, let alone resource—this after Bates ((1930) 202) had written, "To obtain a really satisfactory idea of the drama of Euripides it is not enough to make a careful study of the . . . extant plays," words which launched a morethan100side treatment of the fragmentary plays. In 1967 Webster, impelled by increasingly numerous finds of papyri, gave the fragmentary plays unparalleled space in his *The Tragedies of Euripides*, and located them in Euripides' entire career with attention to evidence of dating and in particular to phases of dramatic style which he identified with their help. Since then scholarly engagement has been prodigious; by 2010 more than 25 fragmentary

plays have been edited and annotated individually, some as many as three or four times. Here is a recent observation: “The inspirational nature of fragments. . .the range of approaches. . .authors take towards tragic fragments: a diversity which is apparent both in terms of methodology and subject matter” (Harvey (2005) 1).

4 List of Euripides’ Known Plays, with (Mostly Approximate) Dates

Fragmentary plays are italicized, with substantial plays in bold type; complete plays are capitalized. The list is based upon Collard and Cropp ((2008) VII.xxix–xxxii.)

Before 431: *Daughters of Pelias* (455); *Cretan Women*; *Alcmeon in Psophis*; ***Telephus****;* ALCESTIS (all four, 438); *Aegeus*; ***Cretans*** .

431 (all four): *Dictys*; ***Philoctetes*** ; *Harvesters* (*Theristae*, satyric; lost in antiquity); MEDEA.

Before 425: ***Hippolytus Veiled*** (dating disputed); CHILDREN OF HERACLES; HIPPOLYTUS (428); ***Bellerophon*** ; *Danae*; *Thyestes*; ***Ino*** ; *Oeneus*; *Phoenix*; *Protesilaus;* ***Stheneboea*** .

Before 420: ***Cresphontes*** ; *Aeolus*; *Temenidae*; *Theseus*; ***Erechtheus*** ; ***Phaethon*** ; ANDROMACHE; HECUBA; SUPPLIANT WOMEN.

Before 415: ***Melanippe Captive****; Antigone*; *Ixion*; *Meleager*; ***Oedipus*** ; *Pleisthenes*; ELECTRA; HERACLES.

415 (all four): ***Alexander*** ; ***Palamedes;*** TROJAN WOMEN; *Sisyphus* (satyric).

Before 410: *Auge*; *Polyidus;* ***Andromeda*** ; ***Melanippe Wise;*** *Alcmene*; IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS; ION; HELEN (412).

410 and after: ***Antiope*** ; ***Hypsipyle*** ; PHOENICIAN WOMEN (all in same year); ***Archelaus*** ; ORESTES; CYCLOPS (satyric); *Alcmeon in Corinth*, produced posthumously with BACCHAE and IPHIGENIA IN AULIS (405).

Thus: eleven titles are known from 455 to 431 (nine fragmentary, two complete), fortynine from 430 to 406 (31 fragmentary, 16 complete); for both kinds, the first half of Euripides’ career is very much less well represented than the second. There is no sure evidence or inference for dating eighteen plays: *Alope*, *Autolycus A* and *B* (satyric, presumed well apart in date), *Busiris* (satyric), *Cadmus* (insecurely attested), *Epeus* (satyric; lost in antiquity), *Eurystheus* (satyric), *Lamia* (satyric), *Licymnius*, *Oenomaus*, *Peleus*, *Rhesus* (lost in antiquity; the surviving play is a later fabrication), *Sciron* (satyric), *Scyrians*, ***Syleus*** (satyric), ***Phrixus A*** and ***B*** (presumed well apart in date), *Temenus*, *Chrysippus*. *Pirithous*, *Rhadmanthys* and *Tennes* are of disputed attribution (see Collard and Cropp (2008) VIII.629–35).

5 Reconstruction of Fragmentary Plays: Possibilities and Limits

The duties of the reconstructor are to evaluate all sources dispassionately; to balance hard facts and likely implications against reasonable inferences, and only then to formulate suggestions; to produce a plausible outline of the plot, and to locate textfragments where possible within it; lastly, to visualize the play as a work of dramatic and theatrical poetry. The reconstructor's only safe assumptions are that the play will have conformed broadly to the formal conventions of tragedy and to the outline of its background myth, however independent of predecessors the poet may have tried to be.

Papyri, chiefly of playtexts and "narrative" *hypotheseis* (see below), have enormously increased our knowledge for roughly fifteen plays; now we have about twentyfive enjoying primary and secondary evidence substantial enough to permit reconstruction of their plots, sometimes quite fully, and often of one or more scenes (see List in section 4 above). Papyrus has added less generously, and very variously, to a further fifteen, for which we can reconstruct broad outlines but rarely scenes, and only seldom details. No papyri have been recovered for the remaining twentyfive or so plays; about ten of these are visible only in most uncertain and often gappy outlines, with occasional dramatic moments, and about fifteen remain near blanks, even when their background myth is known or inferred.

"Narrative" *hypotheseis* (see section 2 (v) above) provide the most compelling—and seductive—startingpoint, whether they are complete (e.g. *Stheneboea* test. iia) or half complete (e.g. *Alexander* test. iii) or only partial (e.g. *Aeolus* test. ii). Yet even the two overlapping *hypotheseis* of *Hippolytus Veiled* (test. iia, b) do not establish details either of its plot or its differences from the complete *Hippolytus*. Similar limitations attend mythographers' paraphrases (also section 2 (v) above).

Long stretches of the dramatic text (2 (i, ii) above) offer the surest basis, especially if there are several from one play (e.g. *Alexander, Hypsipyle*, and *Phaethon*). Bookfragments vary greatly in number between plays, and in no proportion to the extent of any papyrus remains. An aggregate number of lines is in itself no correlative of reconstructibility; and the extent and quality of secondary evidence is often a better determinant. Single large fragments can most usefully supplement—or illuminate—already numerous bookfragments from one play (e.g. papyri from the central parts of *Telephus* and from the very ends of *Antiope* and *Erechtheus*).

Fragments of whatever length, whether on papyrus or as bookfragments (section 2 (iii) above), or secondary evidence (section 2 (vi, vii) above), may aid plotreconstruction only a little but illustrate both issues and characterization, in some cases where other information is lacking (e.g. *Archelaus, Danae, Polyidus*). A good number of shorter, discrete but related fragments will sometimes yield an idea of thematic content (e.g. the debate in *Antiope*, F 182b–9, 193–202)—but may nevertheless appear to belong to different episodes (e.g. *Bellerophon* F 287–302). If single fragments come with their context hinted or described, they too can be of great importance (e.g. Merope's triumphant cry as she is about to kill her son in ignorance in *Cresphontes* F 456, or a servant's brief statement how he helped to blind Oedipus forcibly,

Oedipus F 541). Only a quite small proportion of bookfragments are from lyric, so that for the choral content or tenor (and too often choral identity) of many plays we depend on information from papyri (e.g. *Cresphontes* F 448a.73–82, *Hypsipyle* F 752f).

The usefulness or reliability of art for reconstructing plays is nowadays more subject to dispassionate judgment than during the heady enthusiasm of earlier scholars like Webster (1967). A chief problem is to know whether vasepaintings in particular suggest influence from specific playscenes (e.g. *Meleager* test. ii (2b)), or are "composite," with a collection of persons and variety of actions representing a "whole" myth in one picture (e.g. *Andromeda* test. *v or *Antiope* test. vi (2)).

Some plays present extreme, and extremely varied, methodological problems. Thus for *Danae* there is a remarkable early Byzantine confection of a prologuescene preserved in a medieval manuscript together with an apparent "narrative" *hypothesis* of most uncertain pedigree: F 1132. For *Cretan Women* reconstruction is complicated by a very fragmentary papyrus commentary on the (non)logic of the dramaturgy: test. *v. *Cretans* has only one book fragment of extent (but remarkable content), F 472; two longish papyri, F 472bc and 472e, reveal the essence of the play, but not enough to test its whole outline as apparently encapsulated in a superb and complete late Roman mosaic (see Collard and Cropp (2008) VII.533). *Telephus* remains *the* classic problem for divining the realities of Euripides' play beneath extended and repeated parody by Aristophanes (Kannicht (2004a) 680–7). For *Philoctetes* the secondary evidence is uniquely rich: Dio of Prusa provides a comparison with the plays of Aeschylus (lost) and Sophocles (complete), including literary and aesthetic judgments, and a few fragments and paraphrases—and there is a fragmentary *hypothesis*: test. iiia, b, iva–d, v, F 787–9, 789a–d.

6 What and how do Fragments add to the Appreciation of Euripides?

Most scholars allow that Euripides is consistent only in his variety; clear developments or periods in his dramaturgy are seldom detectable, only emphases, many of which are recurrent. This holds for types of plot; depiction of character; causation and motive (divine, human, or accidental, the three often interactive); structural and formal elements; and theatricality—except that his latest plays include all his longer ones, which tend to have more characters, more extended and fluid episodes, and greater variety in spoken and lyric language.

Such judgments must be based primarily on the second half of his career, on the sixteen complete plays datable between about 430 and his death in 406. In fact the List in this chapter identifies fragmentary plays substantial enough to afford useful comparison with those sixteen, but it shows that their numbers approach equality only after about 425 BCE (a dozen of each). If we then ask how far the fragmentary plays from that period match the survivors in general content and manner, the answer seems reassuring: both sets include profound tragedies, revengestories, situational tearjerkers, moral and emotional rollercoasters, and romantic and happilyending adventures.

Where does this answer leave us? It means that the datable surviving plays seldom give sure guidance in reconstructing the shape and style even of datable fragmentary ones, let alone in dating the rest. On the other hand, the two classes of play not only confirm Euripides' constant variety, they illustrate each other; so the best hope is to use the complete plays as much for the appreciation as for the reconstruction of the fragmentary ones. This conclusion is reflected in the general reluctance of scholars to go beyond gathering and classifying mythological sources and subjects, plottypes, charactertypes, and formal elements in the fragmentary plays.

A different approach identifies what is distinctive or innovative in the fragmentary remains. Bookfragments reflect antiquity's selection, sometimes accompanied by its judgments. Here is a small sample: *Autolycus A* F 282 (satyric), a diatribe against "politically" useless athletes; *Erechtheus* F 362, a father playing an admonitory "Polonius" to (apparently) his son; *Cresphontes* F 453.15–26, opening of an Ode to Peace; *Cretans* F 472, ceremonious entry of a Chorus of mystics; *Oedipus* F 545a, a wife's supreme duty is to her husband in his disaster; *Phaethon* F 779, Phaethon starts driving his father the Sun's chariot under anxious instruction; *Chrysippus* F 839, the indestructibility of living things.

A very few papyri too stem from ancient selections of the poetically or "morally" best, and here is a small selection from the least damaged (and longer) ones: *Cretans* F 472e (parchment, not papyrus), Pasiphae's caustic attackindefense when arraigned for bestiality with the bull; *Melanippe Captive* F 494, a defense of womankind, and F 495, a messenger's description of a failed ambush; *Phaethon* F 772.63–101, a "Dawnsong" on a joyfully anticipated weddingday, while F 781.227–44 from the same play, the weddinghymn itself, survives from an originally complete playtext, like the impressively emotional trial scene of the heroine in *Hypsipyle* (F 757).

Quite meagre remains however can hint at the dramatic power of some scenes, including the vividly theatrical, like the start of *Andromeda*, with the heroine fettered and in dialogue with Echo, and the winged Perseus arriving on the theatrical crane (test. *ivf, *v, F 114–23); Telephus with the baby Orestes as his hostage at the altar in *Telephus* (test. *iiic (2), va, b, F 727); the entries and exits of the winged horse Pegasus in *Bellerophon* (F 306–7) and *Stheneboea* (test. iia throughout, F 665a, 669). Other fragments prompt frustrating questions, for example about the arguments over the incestuous marriages in *Aeolus* (F 19, 23–4); why Theseus described the letters of his name in *Theseus* (F 382, a passage which provoked theatrical imitations); how Phaedra worded her direct advances to Hippolytus in *Veiled* (F 430); whether Icarus did fly at the end of *Cretans* (F 472 g); how Laius defended his rape of Chrysippus (*Chrysippus* test. iv b, F 840–1).

Or there are instances where Euripides appears, in our present knowledge, to have innovated in myth, or even "invented" it (as he did e.g. in the surviving *Andromache, Hecuba, Ion*): his version of Aeolus' incestuous siblings became both notorious and definitive; his *Antigone* had a happy ending (compare Jocasta's survival in *Oedipus* and *Phoenician Women*); the plots of his *Antiope, Archelaus, Erechtheus, Cretans*, two Melanippeplays, *Protesilaus, Hypsipyle*, and *Chrysippus* appear to have been largely original, and most of them were not imitated.

7 Some Individual Phenomena: *Pairs of NamePlays* ; SatyrPlays; Unassigned Fragments

Pairs of nameplays . Like Aeschylus and Sophocles, Euripides sometimes returned to a rich myth or mythical figure. His two Iphigeniaplays survive complete. The two Alcmeonplays (with thirty years between them) and the two Melanippeplays (much closer in time) dramatized different episodes from their namecharacters' lives of family turmoil. The two Phrixusplays were probably well apart in time but reasonably complete *hypotheseis* and secondary narratives for both force us to judge that they had similar plots; nevertheless, of nineteen textfragments (including two papyri) only one is confidently assigned to play "A" and only four to "B," with the result that the development and *dénouement* of each are open to much speculation. The rascally trickster Autolycus gave his name to two satyrplays with very different plots (see next paragraph below). In fact, only recently recovered evidence, and old evidence reevaluated, has confirmed that there were pairs of Phrixus and Autolycusplays at all. The fragmentary *Hippolytus Veiled* was a (probably earlier and) apparently unsuccessful version of the extant *Hippolytus*. Similarly, scraps from two papyri seemed at first to indicate that two *Medea*'s by Euripides were current in the age of the Second Sophistic, and that the extant play, which won only third prize, may have been Euripides' revision; but the matter is in dispute between Colomo (2011) and Luppe (2011). There may have been two versions of *Heracles*.

Satyrplays . Satyric drama is poorly represented among the remains. The reasons lie in its barrenness for gnomologists and anthologists and in the early loss, to antiquity itself, of many satyrplays—even the Alexandrian scholars knew only of ten or so Euripidean titles, not all of them secure, from his probable total production of about twenty, and no "fragments" survive for two or three of these. Yet just enough remains from four to five plays to set beside *Cyclops*, the only Greek satyrplay surviving complete, to show that Euripides could be as diverse and uninhibited in imagination as Aeschylus and Sophocles in this genre. (It is remarkable that our now quite extensive knowledge of their satyrplays is due chiefly to papyri, the former's in *NetFishers, Sacred Delegates* , and a "Justice" (*Dike*) play, the latter's in *Inachus* and *Trackers* (*Ichneutae*)—but we have no papyrus textfragments from Euripides). *Autolycus A* and *B* relied on the exploits of this notorious trickster, a son of Hermes the god of thieves and frauds (whose feats as a miraculous infant are the plot of *Trackers*); his *Eurystheus* has Heracles accomplishing his Twelfth Labor by bringing the monstrous hound Cerberus up from Hades, and terrifying Eurystheus with it, perhaps on stage (F 372); his *Sciron* has Theseus destroying this pest just as Sciron himself destroyed travellers, by throwing them over a cliff; his *Syleus* has this ogre destroyed by Heracles, in a drama which mixed gluttony, drunkenness, and sex with surprising examination of moral characters good and bad (for the source of our extensive information about *Syleus* see section 2 (vi) above). For Euripides' satyrplays see Pechstein (1998); Krumeich (1999); Voelke (2001).

Unassigned fragments. Kannicht (2004a) retained Nauck's numbering (1889[2]) for these, F 845–1132; but the sequence now accommodates many additional fragments intercalated by letters attached to numbers (e.g. F **882b); and it signals many revised attributions (e.g. F 855

= *Hypsipyle* F 756) or deletions (e.g. F 1106); F 1107–32 still number "doubtful or spurious" fragments, some nevertheless recently reclaimed for Euripides. The majority are book fragments, and a large proportion from gnomologies and lexica; almost all are attributed by their sources to Euripides, the others by scholars' conjecture.

Without attribution to a named play, and with the huge majority lacking indication of context or identification of speaker, they are therefore largely intractable except as parallels or illustrations of Euripidean style and topics. Most frustrating are a few papyrustexts, F **953a–m, which some scholars bravely assign to specific plays, for example, a, fragments mysteriously resembling parts of the extant *Heracles* (a variant version?); f, a man banished on horseback (from *Hippolytus Veiled*?); m, an infanticide (from *Ino*?).

8 Illustrative CaseStudies: *Ino, Palamedes, Phoenix*; the Oedipusmyth

Ino. A textbook problem for the reconstructor. Hyginus, *Fables* 4 gives a narrative expressly attributed to Euripides (test. 3) which is almost certainly derived from a *hypothesis*. Twenty one of the twentysix bookfragments are gnomological, and all from Stobaeus (F 400–420), but a context can at least be imagined for many; three of the other five fragments give some help with the action (F *398, *399, 421); and there is one very doubtful acquisition from papyrus (F **953 m below).

The play predates 425 BCE (allusion at Ar. *Ach.* 434 of that year = test. iia: below). It typifies Euripides' early interest in women's extreme passions, actions, and downfalls, and in this play, those of two women (see F 400–2). The plot is from the miserable story of Athamas: his second wife Ino had borne him two sons, but subsequently disappeared, probably through Hera's enmity, because Ino had acted as "nurse" to Zeus' son by Ino's sister Semele, the god Dionysus. Athamas made a second marriage, to Themisto, by whom he had twin sons; then he recovered Ino (or she returned to him) and brought her back into his house in disguise as a servant (in the "rags" mocked by Aristophanes?); she was to tend all four boys. Themisto learned of Ino's return, but could not identify her in the servant; becoming jealous of her step sons and intending to kill them, she ordered Ino to clothe them in black (as if for death; staged? cf. *HF* 329, 526; *Melanippe Wise* test. i), and her own two boys in white; but Ino swapped the clothing, and tricked Themisto into killing her own sons. Discovering the deception, Themisto took her life, whereupon Athamas, maddened by Hera in a further stroke against Ino (Hyginus tells this not in *Fab.* 4, but only in the briefer *Fab.* 2.4), killed one son while hunting, and Ino in grief leapt into the sea with the other. Her deification as the White Goddess (Leucothea) was predicted, no doubt by her "own" god Dionysus, perhaps aetiologizing the white clothing in which she had saved her sons from Themisto. A problem: we have to guess the scene in which Aristophanes elsewhere (*Vesp.* 1412–14 = test. iib) seemingly alludes to Ino's abject supplication of—whom? perhaps Athamas at her longdelayed return, after F **399?

A play uncommonly rich in ideas and incidents, therefore: woman's, wife's and mother's jealousy as a major motif, including that of the goddess Hera deployed through Themisto (cf.

Aphrodite's manipulation of Phaedra in order to destroy Hippolytus in the surviving name play)—jealousy like that of the stepmother Merope in *Alcmeon in Corinth* and Ino's own in *Phrixus A* (reflected perhaps in *Ino* F **399); a double deception of Themisto (Ino's disguise; the swapped clothing); ironic thwarting of human calculation by a god, for all three mortals; suicides by both Themisto and Ino; the worst of tragedies for Athamas, losing both sons, one by his own hand. And there was more: the gnomological fragments show that "nobility" (F 404–5, 413–14) and honourable conduct (F **399, 401–2, 420–12, 417) were prominent themes; and in citing F 413 Plutarch notes Ino's freespeaking role.

Finally there is F **953 m, a badly damaged papyrus of the 3rd century BCE: it has more than forty lines of a lyric exchange (written continuously as prose, so that interpretation is very difficult) between a Chorus, a mother who has killed her son (or sons), and a lamenting "king" who may be her husband. The attribution to *Ino* is most precarious.

Palamedes. The midde play of Euripides' socalled "Trojan Trilogy" of 415 (date documented: test. i, iia, b). The first play, *Alexander*, told how AlexanderParis was exposed as a baby by his parents Priam and Hecuba because of a prophecy he would destroy his city, but survived to be reunited with his parents—and so was again on course to ruin Troy, after the famous Judgment. The third play, *Trojan Women*, depicted Troy's ruthless destruction by the Greeks and the grim suffering of its women, old and young, wives, mothers, and daughters.

Palamedes is set in the Greek camp during Troy's siege; its plot echoes that of tragedies by Aeschylus and Sophocles (see Sommerstein (2010) 250–8), and was perhaps devised by them. The namehero, a brilliant and inventive intellect, is brought low by his jealous rival in cleverness Odysseus, with the complicity of the Greek commander Agamemnon: he is falsely accused of treachery, of accepting and concealing a bribe from Priam; a forged incriminatory letter and gold are planted in his tent. He is tried but despite able selfdefense condemned and executed. Justice upon the Greeks lies in wait, however: Palamedes' brother Oeax, also at Troy, cunningly sends a message to their father Nauplius home in Greece, who comes to Troy to threaten vengeance; and when the Greeks sail home Nauplius will wreck many of their ships by displaying false landing beacons.

The textfragments are few, only thirty or so lines in about ten bookfragments, mostly from Palamedes' trial (F 580–5, with 578–9 possibly from the preceding action, and 588 (see a few lines further below) that following it; F 586 is a tiny, evocative, insecurely locatable lyric excerpt). Secondary evidence, however, is rich and diverse (except for a "blank" from pictorial art), confirming the play's outline: Odysseus' jealousy and plot, test. v*a, *b, cf. Eur. *Philoctetes* F 589d §§ 8–9; Agamemnon's hostility test. *vi, cf. F 581; mythography, esp. *scholia* on *Or.* 432. Odysseus' planted letter recalls that of Phaedra (*Hipp.* 856). Odysseus uses Palamedes' own invention of writing (F 578.3) against him—but the letter's work is reciprocated and undone (ironically) by Oeax's method of informing Nauplius, messages scratched on oarblades thrown into the sea (parodied by Aristophanes' prisoner throwing scratchedon tablets out of a window, *Thesm.* 776–84 and *scholia* = F 588a). An unpublished Michigan papyrus, with the end of a "narrative" *hypothesis*, apparently confirms Nauplius' role. In particular F 588, three choral verses, laments the Greeks' killing of Palamedes as "the

Muses' nightingale" (cf. his praise of music, F 580.3); its source, an undatable epitome of the fourth century Isocrates' *Busiris* (= test. ii), asserts that Euripides used his Palamedes to allude to Socrates, judicially murdered by the Athenians, and that "the whole theatre understood and wept." Since Socrates was still alive when the play was first produced, either an audience was watching a later revival, or, some think, the statement adapts Euripides' (supposed) allusion to a (supposed) Athenian prosecution of the sophist Protagoras about the year 420. It may be corroborative that all three plays of the trilogy embody rhetorically slanted "trials" (of Paris in *Alexander*, of Palamedes, and of Helen in *Trojan Women*).

Phoenix. The play is of interest on two counts, the variety and nature of the sources and the content, and Euripides' bold invention, thus revealed. The plotmyth is known before Euripides only from *Iliad* 9.437–95: Phoenix's father Amyntor forsook his wife's bed for a concubine; Phoenix's mother persuaded him to lie with the woman, to alienate her from Amyntor. The father discovered this, and cursed his son; Phoenix left his home and found protection with Peleus, who made him tutor to his son Achilles. Plutarch states that *Iliad* 9.458–61, recording that Phoenix had considered killing his father, were struck from the poem by the second century BCE editor Aristarchus (and all modern editors have followed). Euripides, it appears, sanitized the full Iliadic version, "bringing the hero on stage as guiltless" despite obeying his mother (test. iic); he increased Phoenix's misery by having the concubine accuse him falsely of rape (test. iiid, cf. iva); and he had Amyntor believe her and blind him (test. iiid; Ar. *Ach.* 421 = test. iiia alludes to Euripides' blind Phoenix; F 815 may refer to Amyntor's orders for the blinding). A midfourth century Apulian crater showing the arrival of Peleus, to promise refuge to Phoenix, is commonly associated with the Euripides' ending (see Taplin (2007) 214 no. 80; it is not mentioned in Kannicht (2004a)); if so, it was another change from Homer. Demosthenes 19.246 (= test. v) permits inference that the play was indeed much revived in the fourth century.

The textfragments, although mostly gnomological (11 out of 14), can be located well enough in the play; more important, they help suggest its general temper. It varied one of Euripides' favored plots, seduction of a vulnerable young man by a married woman ("Potiphar's Wife": e.g. the two Hippolytusplays, *Peleus* and *Stheneboea*). Thus Euripides made as much of the deceived Amyntor's tragedy as that of Phoenix, depicting Amyntor from the start as insecure and anxious, despite his wealth (prologue, F 803a), and aware that his old age alienated him from both son and wife (F 803b, 804–7). Some fragments are very striking. F 812, a passage very famous in antiquity, and perhaps F **813a (cf. F 810–11), appear to bring a third voice into a judgmentscene about truth and moral qualities: Peleus "arbitrating" between father and son, as suggested by the Apulian crater? In F 816, near or at the play's end, Phoenix braves himself to endure living on, in darkness, and in F 817, living in exile: for forcible blinding and its aftermath in Euripides compare, for example, *Oedipus* and (Polymestor in) *Hecuba*.

The play therefore had evident contemporary impact (Aristophanes) and later popularity (the crater, Demosthenes, literary testimonia); its fraught and exciting plot illustrates Aristotle's muchcited commendation of Euripides for technically "tragic" endings (Arist. *Poet.* 1453a323–30).

The Oedipusmyth. Euripides' handling of the accursed Theban royal family affords a very good casestudy of his bold innovation in myth, turning or inventing incident to his purpose (for the Oedipusmyth see especially Robert (1915) and Edmunds (2006)). In the order of events: *Chrysippus* depicted Laius' lust for and rape of this beautiful youth, causing the boy's suicide and his father's curse upon Laius and his descendants. While Euripides is said to have been the first to dramatize pederasty, it is not clear whether he was condemning it or (test. iv) condoning it or even approving it. (Note on "sex" in Euripides: where *Chrysippus* made tragedy from pederasty, *Aeolus* was unique for its portrayal of incest (voluntary)—and scandalous (F 19 and Ar. *Ran.* 1475, cf. test. ivb ^{2} = Ar. *Ran.* 1081). *Cretans* featured bestiality (godinflicted), and probably for that reason was the only play of Euripides not quarried by gnomologists—and yet two second century CE papyri survive to suggest its long currency. *Protesilaus* was certainly bold and perhaps unique in dramatizing a widow's physical passion for her husband's statue.

Oedipus retold the grim story of Laius' parricidal and then incestuous son perhaps one generation after Sophocles's play and two after that of Aeschylus—but Euripides not only changed the selfblinding of Oedipus for retributive blinding by the Thebans (F 541), but had his mother and wife Jocasta live on to tend him, sharing his guilt and suffering (F *545a, a remarkable passage), perhaps still in Thebes, as in *Phoenician Women*, rather than in exile (but see F 554b).

Even more remarkably, *Antigone* not only has Oedipus' daughter surviving her defiance of the new Theban ruler Creon's interdict upon burying her traitorous brother Polynices, but also makes Creon's son Haemon complicit in her action, so that their love saves both from execution (test. iia, cf. F 162a). *Antigone*, like *Phoenician Women*, took the family story into the generation of the "Seven Against Thebes"; in the two Alcmeonplays, *In Psophis* and *In Corinth*, which were well apart in time, and incidentally in *Hypsipyle*, Euripides pursued that war into the tragic fortunes of the seer Amphiaraus, betrayed by his wife, and of his son Alcmeon whom he ordered to avenge him by matricide.

9 Supplementary Note 2015

I am grateful to the editor Laura Mcclure for agreeing that my main text might remain unaltered from 2010, and for accepting this supplement.

Some of the chapter's content was reused for my "Fragmentary and Lost Plays" (2014, for all of Tragedy); there I briefly discuss five Euripidean plays in addition to those in section 8: *Cretans, Philoctetes, Oedipus, Andromeda*, and *Archelaus*. Three of those in the chapter have been particularly affected by recent publications.

For *Ino* there is a significant new fragment, P. Oxy. 5131 ed. W. Luppe and W.B. Henry (2012); it has 28 badly damaged lines, seven or eight nevertheless with clear meaning. In a wide ranging discussion Finglass (2014) confirms attribution to the play, for the lines span choral anapaests heralding the arrival of Learchus' body for funeral; then Athamas is named speaking briefly his sorrow for his little son, and Ino is named beginning a mother's monody of lament.

This, near playend; Finglass argues, on the basis of rich and telling comparisons with other Euripidean plots, that Ino would then have left the scene and thrown herself into the sea together with her other son Melicertes; a *deus ex machina* would have narrated their deaths and forecast their apotheosis. On the evidence of the new papyrus Finglass persuasively rejects F **953 m (P. Strasb. 304–7) from the *Ino* (it was suggested by Fassino (1999)); and adds that features of P. Oxy. mark it out as a performancetext, to set beside others for Oxyrhynchus which suggest Tragic revivals there in the 3rd century CE.

For *Palamedes* the fragmentary hypothesispapyrus P. Mich. Inv. 3020a has now been published by Luppe (2011). It reveals that the Greeks had attempted to drown Palamedes' brother Oeax, but the Nereids rescued him; and it confirms that their father Nauplius indeed came to Troy to theaten Agamemnon with vengeance; but the curtailed hypothesis does not mention Oeax's scheme with the oarblades, let alone clarify how—or even whether—Nauplius received or reacted to it.

As to *The Oedipusmyth* , all testimonies, papyrusfragments, and bookfragments of Euripides' *Oedipus* have been reconsidered, in the equivalent of a new edition, by Liapis (2014). He authenticates only F 539a, 540, 540a, 540b, 554b and 556, arguing that the remaining 17 fragments, including F 541 (!), and 545 and 545a (!), are "spurious . . . not from a fullfledged play but from a rhetorical exercise." Liapis' edition is rich in material and skilful, and provocative: good. I must content myself with my two exclamation marks.

The surge of new publications remarked at the end of section 3 continues: for every year *APh* lists between 15 and 20, longer or shorter; but many of them appear in conference proceedings or *Festschriften*, sometimes difficult of access. I have noticed these new editions: *Alexandros* Di Giuseppe (2012); a further one is promised by I. Karamanou; *Andromeda* Pagano (2010); *Erechtheus* Sonnino (2010; both a major edition and a general study). Here is a necessarily invidious selection of reasonably accessible publications since 2009 which illustrate the range of current work: *Alexandros* Karamanou (2011); *Andromeda* Podlecki (2009); *Antiope* Natanblut (2009), López Cruces (2011), Gibert (2012); *Cresphontes* Lu Hsu (2014: the long awaited official *editio princeps* of P. Mich. 6973); *Cretans* Woodford (2009); *Danae* Magnani (2010: F 1132 a late Byzantine composition); *Erechtheus* Calame (2011); an "Ur *Medea*" rejected by Colomo (2011: see section 7 *Pairs of nameplays*). Satyrplays (section 7) O'Sullivan and Collard (2013) 384–413.

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FURTHER READING

Surveys of the field of study are made for all Tragedy by Kassel (2005) and Harvey (2005), both mainly historical on collecting and editing; Cropp (2005); and Collard (2014); for Euripides Collard and Cropp (2008) VII, xi–xxxiii, with sections on Evidence for the Lost Plays, Collecting and Editing of the Fragments, and List and Chronology of the Plays. Also for Euripides: the most uptodate bibliographies (until 2007) and indexes of mythical subjects, narrative, and dramatic features, and topics, are in Collard and Cropp (2008)—together with the Greek texts themselves and annotated translations, and short introductions. Methodology was treated early on by Webster (1967) 9–12; it is helpful for Euripides to adduce the discussions by Sommerstein *et al.*, for Sophocles (2006) xviii–xxvii and for Aeschylus (2010) 62–5. Important individual casestudies with nevertheless general implications are in the editions of *Phaethon* by Diggle (1970) 35–46; *Antiope* by Kambitsis (1972) I–XXVI; *Temenus* and *Temenidae* by Harder in Hofmann and Harder (1991) 117–35; *Philoctetes* by Müller (2000) 21–4 and (review) by Collard (2006); *Cretan Women* and *Oedipus* by Collard (2005) 52–62. The difficult interpretative relationship between Euripides' fragmentary plays and 4th century BCE vasepainting is brilliantly treated by Taplin (2007) 22–4, 166–219, with superb illustrations. The most useful accounts of all the plays by date, content and context are by Webster (1967), except where his speculative reconstructions have been overtaken by subsequent discoveries of papyri. For general appreciation see especially Matthiessen (2002) 250–76 (11 plays); Cropp (2005) 280–6; Mastronarde (2010). Mythcycles and plots are extensively analyzed by Jouan (1966), Aélion (1983, Vol. 1) and (1986), Kannicht (2004b) 196–200; cf. Collard and Cropp (2008) VII.xxi–iii. Lastly, a feast for the eyes while at the coffeetable: Önal, *The Zeugma Mosaics* (2009): see section 5, on *Cretans* (also *Andromeda, Antiope, Danae, Dictys, ?Eurystheus, ?Scyrians*).

PART V
Form, Structure, and Performance

CHAPTER 25
Form and Structure

Markus Dubischar

Analyses of form and structure are heuristically most productive for works of artists for whom three things are true: first, they work in longcontinuing artistic traditions that provide them with a highly developed set of formal and structural conventions; second, their enormous productivity largely relies on the repeated use and at the same time constant modification of these formal and structural set pieces; third, their works survive in numbers large enough to allow comparative analyses reliably to bring out regular patterns that reflect both genre conventions and the artist's individual habits or preferences.

Of the three famous Greek tragedians, Euripides most fully meets these three conditions. Not only is he the youngest of the three playwrights and thus looks back on the longest genre tradition; also more of his oeuvre has survived in absolute numbers and proportionally, with 18 plays out of 88 or 92, than is the case for Aeschylus (six or seven plays out of 70–90) or Sophocles (seven plays out of more than 120). Greek tragedy and the works of Euripides in particular are therefore a rich and fruitful field for structural and formal analyses, and the benefits of this approach have often been stated (e.g., Jens (1971b) xi–xv; Taplin (1977) 58–60; Seeck (1984) 1–9; Schauer (2002) 17–24; Revermann (2006) 113–14; Collard (2007b) 4–5; Dubischar (2007) 2–3; Mastronarde (2010) 44–5).

Consequently, many aspects of form and structure in Euripidean tragedy have thoroughly been studied over the past decades. Most of these inquiries, however, focus on particular features, such as Euripidean messenger reports, revenge plots, or *deus ex machina* scenes, or on the composition of individual plays (cf. the chapters in Jens (1971a) and the pertinent sections in Hose (2005)). All these studies have left a need to which this contribution wants to respond: the need for a concise yet relatively comprehensive synopsis. Almost the only, and by far the best, specimen of this type of overview today is still Collard (1981) 5–29, with which the present contribution will share common ground while also complementing it. Certain compositional features and interpretive questions will be investigated here more deeply than in Collard (not only but especially in sections 4 through 8 in this contribution) while, vice versa, other aspects of Euripidean form and structure are treated more extensively by Collard (1981, e.g. 9–11 on character types or 25–27 on Euripidean language).

Before fully embarking on the study of form and structure in Euripidean drama, a *caveat* is in place: it should be from the start that the purpose of formal and structural analyses, whether they are concerned with the tragedies of Euripides or with any other works of sophisticated craftsmanship and art, is never to arrive at a dry and schematic catalogue of forms (cf. Easterling (1997b)). The compositional elements that make up the works of evercreative artists, such as Euripides, do not fit a few rigid molds, and the observable formal and structural regularities do not restrict or stifle the poet's creative process but rather support and

even fuel it. Such set pieces of different types and sizes are compositional raw material, as it were, with qualities highly favorable to creativity and originality. For these elements are firm enough to provide structure, but also flexible enough to allow and continually encourage their inventive use. Therefore, when studying Euripides' use of Greek tragedy's typical compositional elements (or Beethoven's use of the sonataform, or Eric Clapton's use of the blues pattern, and so forth) the artistic accomplishment is never *that* the artists work with a particular pattern but rather *how* they work with it, how they choose, combine, modify, and occasionally even break away from a pattern so as best and most effectively achieve the artistic purpose at hand.

While this means that, in theory, compositional analyses should not only identify general patterns but also describe and explain what is compositionally peculiar or even unique in a work, the focus in this contribution will be on the general and the reoccurring rather than on the particular and the peculiar. This imbalance is owed to present space constraints, but is also justifiable given that Euripidean scholarship, as was pointed out, is currently tilted in the other direction.

1 Aristotelian Basics

Greek tragedy's most basic formal pattern can be conceived of as an alternation of (i) scenes in which actors speak and act and (ii) musical parts in which the Chorus sings and dances (Taplin (1977) 55 and elsewhere). A more specific typology of the formal elements of Greek tragedy is found in the twelfth chapter of Aristotle's *Poetics*, where Aristotle identifies the following structural units as common to all tragedies: prologue, episode, *exodos* (final scene), and choral unit (χορικόν), the last being either a *parodos* (choral entry song) or a *stasimon* (choral interlude). In addition, as Aristotle points out, some plays contain actors' songs from the stage (τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς σκηνῆς) and *kommoi* (dirges with choral and actor participation).

Even though Aristotle in certain passages of his *Poetics* plays down the role of the tragic Chorus (Halliwell (1986) 238), the major choral parts (*parodos* and *stasima*) still that help him arrive at his definitions:

- Prologue: "the whole part of a tragedy before the *parodos*"
- Episode: "a whole part of a tragedy between whole choral songs"
- *Exodos*: "the whole part of a tragedy after which there is no choral song"
- *Parodos* (entrance song): "the first whole utterance (λέξις) of a Chorus"
- *Stasimon*: "a choral song (μέλος χοροῦ) without anapest or trochee (ἄνευ ἀναπαίστου καὶ τροχαίου)" (see also West (1987) 53–5 and Mastronarde (2002) 74–5 and 103–5).

Of the two elements that are only present in some tragedies, one is explicitly defined:

- *Kommos*: "a dirge shared by the Chorus and actors on stage."

Two more definitions must be added to make this inventory of the principal tragic structural units complete:

- *Amoibaion*: an emotionally charged responsesong in a variety of forms (Popp (1971)): halflyric (one party sings, the other speaks) or lyric (both parties sing); composed in strophes with corresponding antistrophes or as a shorter *astrophon* (a nonstrophic song); the participants can be an actor and the Chorus, or two actors, or even two actors and the Chorus; the parts of the contributing parties in an *amoibaion* may be quantitatively balanced, or that of one party (singing or speaking) may dominate. The *kommos* mentioned by Aristotle is thus a special type of *amoibaion* (Popp (1971) 222; Taplin (1977) 474).
- Monody, in the *Poetics* with some imprecision referred to as τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς σκηνῆς (Taplin (1977) 474): an actor's emotionally charged solosong; its form and content may vary (Barner (1971)).

It is has long been noted that some of the important concepts Aristotle develops in the *Poetics*, such as the single action and the single hero, the character of the hero, or tragic *hamartia*, are not equally or universally applicable to all Greek tragedies (Mastronarde (2010) 63–4; already Wilamowitz (1959, orig. 1889) 109–13). But Aristotle's mentioned classification of Greek tragedy's basic structural units, however, when modified so as also to include the elements of *amoibaion* and monody, is still fundamental and indispensable. It is widely used by modern commentators and, it should be stressed, helpful even when it fails, as it occasionally does (Taplin (1977) 50–2 and 470–6), adequately to capture the character of a specific compositional element. For in these instances, Aristotle's classification in fact reliably points us to unusual compositional features that deserve special attention. For these reasons, the terminology established by Aristotle in chapter twelve of the *Poetics* will also be used in this study.

2 Formal Structures: Basic Units, Special Scene Types, Microstructures, Other Features

We will never be able to tell just how exactly Athenian tragic playwrights conceived of the basic compositional units with which they were working. But there can be no doubt that the reliance on and frequent modification of basic structural elements was to a considerable degree conscious, and that many audience members, too, were aware of the existence of certain formal and structural patterns and genre conventions (Taplin (1977) 59; Revermann (2006)). More importantly, we can observe that each tragedian in his plays puts the basic compositional elements to use in ways that reflect both the genre's gradual evolution, fueled by a competitive institutional frame (Mastronarde (2010) 45), as well as a poet's individual artistic habits, development, and preferences.

Several studies have analyzed the Euripidean, or all three tragic playwrights', handling of the basic compositional elements, that is, of prologue and *parodos* (Schmidt (1971); Erbse (1984); Hose (1990) 40–181; Goward (1999) 149–65; Lowe (2004) 270–3), episode (Aichele

(1971)), *stasimon* (Kranz (1933); Hose (1991); Lowe (2004) 274–6; Swift (2010); Mastronarde (2010) 130–52), *exodos* (Kremer (1971); Dunn (1996); Lowe (2004) 278–9), and *amoibaion* and monody (Popp (1971); Barner (1971); Schauer (2002)); Taplin (1977) is of general relevance.

The following compositional characteristics have been identified as prominent in Euripidean tragedy: long orientating prologuespeeches, delivered by a god or a mortal, which give but also deliberately withhold information about earlier events; episodic longforms in the later plays that have twice or even three times the length of normal episodes; a gradual increase in the structural dominance of episodes over choral odes; *stasima* in the later plays that at first sight seem thematically detached; and, finally, monodies in most tragedies (already in *Alcestis*), developed into longer and musically more extravagant arias in Euripides' later career.

As far as we can retrace aspects of Euripides' artistic development (Strohm (1957); Collard (1981); Hose (2008)), it is evident that Euripidean playwriting profoundly changed in several ways not long after the production of *Trojan Women* in the year 415. Therefore, following common practice, "later" plays here always refers to plays produced after 415. To be sure, several continuities do run through the entire Euripidean oeuvre; the posthumously performed *Bacchae* differs in important respects from other post415 tragedies; what we call "early" Euripidean plays are in fact works by an already experienced and "mature" poet since Euripides was in his early forties at the time of *Alcestis* (438) and his debut at the Great Dionysia had taken place 18 years earlier (455). These facts notwithstanding, the time between *Trojan Women* and *Iphigenia among the Taurians* (likely date 414) still marks, for us at any rate, a time of pivotal change in the development of Euripidean art.

Greek tragedy's compositional structures extend far beyond the obvious formal units mentioned so far. There are also special types of spoken scenes, small "microstructural" elements, and other features of Euripidean structural and formal craftsmanship. In these areas, too, Euripides generously used preexisting and premolded elements, which he incessantly modified in varying degrees so as to incorporate them into evernew dramatic contexts. Some of these elements he cultivated so fervently that both ancients and moderns have come to regard them as trademarks of Euripidean playwriting.

Four special, theatrically spectacular scenetypes evolved among the actors' scenes, each with its characteristic form, theme, and character. Two of them showcase long speeches (*rhêseis*; Mannsperger (1971)) that display rhetorical and narrative virtuosity: scenes of formal debate and messenger scenes.

At the heart of Euripidean debate scenes (Duchemin (1945); Strohm (1957) 3–49; Collard (1975a); Lloyd (1992); Dubischar (2001); Barker (2009) 267–365; Mastronarde (2010) 222–245)—as well as in Sophocles, but not in Aeschylus (Dubischar (2006))—is a pair of opposing speeches, constituting what the involved characters sometimes call a contest of words/speeches (ἄμιλλα λόγων or ἀγὼν λόγων). Debates in Euripides tend to arise in three types of situations (Dubischar (2001) 56–80): (i) heated moral reckoning about a character's past actions, (ii) deliberation about a character's decision to take a drastic measure

(e.g. commit suicide), or (iii) supplication. The first two *agōn* types typically involve two conflicting parties, namely accuser and defendant (reckoning debate) or a figure who has made a radical decision and advisor/counselor (deliberation debate). Supplication debates, however, typically bring together the three parties: the suppliant(s), the persecutor, and a figure of authority, who decides the suppliant's fate and thus often also becomes a rescuer. Among the Euripidean *agōn* scenes, the reckoningdebates are interpretively most intriguing. They bring out, but never solve, glaring and disturbing moral differences and ambivalences inherent in the plays' fundamental conflicts. It is not unusual for plays of Euripides to contain two big debates, *Andromache* and *Suppliants* even feature three *agōn* scenes, while *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, where intrigue has entirely replaced open confrontation, is the only Euripidean tragedy extant without a debate scene.

Messenger reports, we may safely assume, were expected with excitement and great anticipation by Athenian theater audiences. Our evidence shows that the playwrights rarely disappointed them in this regard (on function: Heath (1987); on composition: Erdmann (1964); Hose (1990) 201–15; on focalization, "objectivity," and knowledge de Jong (1991); Barrett (2002); Scodel (2009)). Messenger figures report events that are always crucial to the plot and often drastically violent and disastrous in their consequences ("milder" reports are in *Children of Heracles*, *Suppliants*, *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, *Ion*, *Orestes*) as having recently occurred backstage or offstage (Joerden (1971) 369), that is, inside the *skênê* building (e.g., inside a palace or a tent) or in a more distant location (e.g., a seashore or a battlefield). As a rule that also holds true for Aeschylus and Sophocles, the messenger in the course of a brief introductory dialogue succinctly states what happened before embarking on the long report that is full of vivid, moving, and frequently shocking details. The outcome of the reported events is oftentimes subsequently made visible in a gripping *tableau* scene, which in many cases is also the tragedy's concluding *exodos*scene.

A further special scenetype are *deus ex machina* scenes, which give the spectators the visual thrill of watching a divine figure arrive from above by means of the *geranos* (crane; Taplin (1977) 443–7; Mastronarde (2002) 38–40). Euripides employs this type of scene in plays from all periods: *Hippolytus*, *Andromache*, *Suppliants*, *Electra*, *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, *Ion*, *Helen*, *Orestes*, *Bacchae* (Spira (1960); Schmidt (1964); Nicolai (1990); Vogel (2008); Mastronarde (2010) 181–195)). (Roselli in this volume discusses the technical innovations of the crane and god from the machine in his chapter on performance.) The *deus ex machina* is usually incorporated into the closing scene or scene sequence. Appearing in turbulently derailed or disastrous situations, the gods provide authoritative and sometimes strongarmed closure to a play's action; they do so by giving explanations or offering consolation, by commanding reconciliation, and by giving orders concerning the near and more distant future, which often involve aetiological elements. Only in *Suppliants*, where the good Athenian ruler Theseus largely determines the course of events (Mills (1997)), less drastic intervention suffices. Paradoxically, while the gods effectively bring stability to the dramatic situation with which the tragedy closes, the interpretation of these endings is notoriously difficult. Are such closures optimistically and piously to be taken at facevalue? Are they "ironic" and pessimistic? Or are many of them—this arguably the most plausible interpretation—intended to

remain ambivalent? Each *deus ex machina* scene (like so much else in Euripides) must be interpreted on its own terms and with an openness to evaluate and tolerate dissonant juxtapositions and signals in the text—and a disillusioned outlook on life (Pfister (1988) 57–68; Mastronarde (2010) 311–12 and elsewhere).

The final special scenetype to be discussed here is the socalled *stichomythia* ("line talk"), a quickpaced dialogue with linebyline speaker changes; occasionally the form is slowed down to a *distichomythia*, where the speaker changes every two lines, or accelerated to *antilabê*, in which each line is divided among two interlocutors, a variant used especially in trochaic tetrameters. Stichomythic dialogues (Schwinge (1968a); Seidensticker (1971); Collard (2007c); Schuren (2010)) occur, on the one hand, as short and structurally subordinate units, for instance in messenger scenes, formal debates, or when a revenge victim is lured into a trap. In their extended form, however, when Euripides takes on the challenge of creating long and lucid stichomythic dialogues of considerable compositional autonomy, *stichomythiae* deserve to be regarded as a distinct type of spoken scene in their own right. The charm of these ostentatiously extended linebyline exchanges should not be underestimated. These highly stylized dialogues demonstrate the poet's skill as they trace in small and precise steps the progression of information or argument, bring out fine psychological and emotional nuances in the exchange, and, finally, because the audience's understanding of the dramatic situation is generally superior to that of at least one of the interlocutors, long *stichomythiae* often create amusing or ironic double meanings. Themes and situations that lend themselves particularly well to this kind of treatment are the sharing of very personal information as well as the undertaking of extended deliberations; both regularly occur in the contexts of recognition (*anagnôrisis*) or planning of an intrigue (*mêchanêma*).

Much smaller than the conspicuous scenetypes discussed so far are "microstructural" elements. These smallscale compositional units, which consist of no more than a few lines, are more difficult to spot not only because of their smallness but also because they are generally seamlessly integrated into the larger context. To the unsuspecting reader these passages may therefore easily appear as "natural" and "spontaneous" dialogues. But comparative analyses show that Euripides frequently also relies on such prefabricated small elements. These, too, like the large building units, he handles flexibly and efficiently to make them fit each specific dramatic situation. Microstructural elements are Euripides' response to compositional or staging challenges that occur regularly but must be dealt with quickly because they plot has to move on. Examples are certain plot or staging transitions that must be plausibly be integrated into the larger context, such as actors' entrances and exits or the beginnings and endings of dialogues between characters (Webster (1933); Taplin (1977); Mastronarde (1979); Halleran (1984); Roberts (1987)). Micropatterns are also behind crucial dialogue passages, for instance, when, outside of messenger scenes, terrible news must be delivered within only a few lines but nevertheless with great emotional impact (Dubischar (2007)). Microstructures, of whom many still need to be detected, deepen our understanding of Euripides' art. They reveal the impressive level of this poet's technical sophistication that goes far beyond the wellknown large structural building blocks and extends to the frequent use also of small, microstructural elements. The surviving plays by Euripides thus provide ample material to

study not only the planks and beams, as it were, that make up his tragedies but also the hinges and screws that, despite their smallness, are equally essential to the functional whole.

Other compositional features can cut across different spoken and/or lyric structural units. They include monologues and soliloquies (Schadewaldt (1926)), laments and mourning (Schauer (2002)), all kinds of choral parts (Hose (1990/91); Swift (2010)), and songs (Csapo (1999/2000, 2004); ChongGossard (2008)). In other cases, they concern special situations of communication, like threeactor exchanges (Listmann (1910)), asides (Bain (1977)), and even silences (Stockert (2004); ChongGossard (2008)).

3 Narrative Patterns in Euripides

The structures surveyed thus far are formal structures. But Euripides often also relies on recurring sequences of certain situations and events, that is, on narrative patterns that shape the tragedy's story and plot (for the distinction between "story" and "plot" see Pfister (1988) 196–8). A very basic, almost universal pattern to which narratives of many kinds often adhere consists of the following elements: establishing of a lead character, inciting incident, goal or objective, obstacle, crisis, climax, and resolution (e.g. Letwin, Stockdale and Stockdale (2008) 1–2; Pfister (1988) 239–245). This basic pattern also underlies many Euripidean plays. However, by the second half of the fifth century, Athenian tragedy had evolved into a genre of not only remarkable formal but also great narrative sophistication. Therefore, Euripides (and Sophocles as well) modifies, enriches, or complicates this basic pattern in every one of his surviving plays, even in those tragedies that have, narratologically speaking, relatively simple, singlestranded plots, such as *Medea*, *Bacchae*, and the satyrplay *Cyclops*.

Given the dialogical character of Greek tragedy, Euripides generally favors plots that involve two or more prominent characters; the plays most dominated by one strong central character are *Hecuba*, *Medea* (but Jason has much stage presence as well), and *Heracles* (but the great hero, who is at the center of everyone's thoughts from the play's beginning, appears on stage relatively late). When tragedies have multiple prominent characters, the dramatic focus may be on two or more of them simultaneously or sequentially, one after the other, in which case the lead shifts from one character to another either gradually or abruptly (Heath (1987) 90–7). The plays' plots entail objectives, obstacles, and conflicts of great variety and in intriguing combinations (see shortly below). Occasionally, even seeming solutions that have been reached toward a tragedy's end turn out to spark surprising further action before the play reaches its definitive ending (especially *Andromache* and *Phoenician Women*, also *Children of Heracles*, and *Helen*), a feature that should not be quickly dismissed as a compositional flaw (Mastronarde (2010) 73–77; Allan (2000)).

Already Aeschylean and Sophoclean plays end in ways that can hardly be called clean and easily interpretable. This is even truer for Euripides. With the exception—but even this is debatable—of the "patriotic" plays (*Children of Heracles*, *Suppliants*), the endings of Euripidean tragedies, regardless whether they end catastrophically or on a more "happy" note, show situations so fraught with explicit and implicit ambivalences and dissonances that that

narrative “resolution” or “closure” here means little more than that new situational stability has been reached. Perceptive recipients, however, may always feel puzzled or vexed by pressing questions that Euripidean plays raise but in the end do not answer (Mossman (1995); Dunn (1996); Mastronarde (2010) 181–206; Buxton (2013) 161–72).

A number of recurring story and plot patterns in Euripides can be distinguished based on the types of objectives the main characters pursue, the obstacles they face, the conflicts that arise, and the resolutions that are eventually achieved. Prevalent narrative patterns that thus emerge are those of revenge, rescue, recognition (*anagnôrisis*), intrigue (*mêchanêma*), supplication (*hiketeia*), and sacrifice/selfsacrifice (Lattimore (1964); Burian (1997)). These structures are flexible in size so that they can be rather compressed (e.g. the supplication debate in *Children of Heracles* or the swift revenge on Lycus in *Heracles*) or extended to half a play (supplicationdebate sequences in *Andromache* and *Suppliants*) or even an entire play (revenge plot in *Medea*). In addition, some narrative patterns are easily combined, such as *mêchanêma* and revenge, *mêchanêma* and escape, supplication and rescue, or *anagnôrisis* and *mêchanêma*, to name the most common combinations. As broad typological categories, the distinctions of these patterns are helpful first steps toward a better appreciation of Euripidean narrative art. However, they are only first steps. For the patterns come in many variations, they themselves consist of smaller subpatterns (e.g. Hose (1991) 18–19; Dubischar (2001) 76–7), and of course every tragedy also contains story elements that fall outside those patterns.

Revenge tragedies (Burnett (1998); Mossman (1995) 164–203) throughout are *Medea* and arguably *Bacchae*; in other plays, including *Children of Heracles*, *Hippolytus*, *Hecuba*, *Electra*, *Heracles*, and the satyrplay *Cyclops*, revenge dominates parts of the plots. Help or rescue provided by an external agent to threatened or desperate victims is fundamental to *Alcestis*, *Children of Heracles*, *Andromache*, *Suppliants*, and *Heracles* and is also important in *Medea* (Aigeus). In *Heracles* the help motif is tragically doubled as Heracles first rescues his family, but later needs to be rescued himself; in *Medea*, however, the only external help the determined heroine needs is Aigeus’ oath granting her safety in Athens. In plots without external rescue figures, the distressed characters must rely on their own cleverness and help themselves and/or manage to escape, particularly in *Electra*, *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, and *Helen* (Matthiessen (1967); Wright (2005)), also in *Ion*, *Orestes*, and the satyr play *Cyclops*. In this context, dialogues of deliberation often lead to the planning of a *mêchanêma*, that is, an intrigue or other cunning plan involving deception (Strohm (1957) 64–21; Solmsen (1968, orig. 1932); Hose (1991) 18–19). Such *mêchanêmata* pave the way for deadly revenges (*Electra* and *Heracles*), escapes (*Iphigenia among the Taurians* and *Helen*), a murder attempt (*Ion*), and a more complex assault involving an attempted killing, hostage taking, and possibly burning down a palace and collective suicide (*Orestes*). In other cases, single individuals in distress come up on their own, and more or less in secret, with deceptive plans for cruel revenge (*Medea*, *Hippolytus* [Phaedra’s intrigue against Hippolytus], *Hecuba*) or a hardly less cruel sacrificial killing (*Iphigenia at Aulis*). In these cases, obviously no open deliberation takes place, but the agents may feel massive doubts along the way. Some *mêchanêmata* are, at least outwardly, successful, as in *Electra* (but the siblings afterward collapse under their guilt), *Heracles* (but the hero afterward slaughters his own family), and

Helen (but Theonoe is temporarily destined to become a victim of Theoclymenos' anger); some *mêchanêmata* are partly successful, as in *Orestes* (Hermione is taken hostage); and some fail, as in *Iphigenia among the Taurians* (a wind pushes the escapers' boat back to the land), *Ion* (Creusa's plot is discovered), and *Iphigenia at Aulis* (Agamemnon's plot is discovered), and these failures then necessitate other, unexpected solutions. Finally and unsurprisingly, divine revenge plans work more smoothly than those of humans; Euripidean gods seeking retribution (*Hippolytus*, *Heracles*, *Bacchae*) do not go through cumbersome deliberation, they never question their own plans, and their successes are sweeping and absolutely merciless.

The plot element of *anagnôrisis* brings the unexpected recognition of longseparated family members (Matthiessen (1967); Schwinge (1968a); Seidensticker (1971); Goward (1999) 131–147). In his later tragedies, Euripides generously cultivates this plot pattern and turns it into long and moving sequences of dialogue and action in which drawn out recognitions take place between siblings (*Electra*, *Iphigenia among the Taurians*), mother and son (*Ion*), and husband and wife (*Helen*). Variations of this pattern are two mistaken recognitions between, as the involved characters believe, father and son (*Ion*) and future motherinlaw and soninlaw (*Iphigenia at Aulis*).

The plotelement of *hiketeia* (supplication) is typically combined by Euripides with the motif of refugeseeking at an altar (*Altarflucht*), which is the case in *Children of Heracles*, *Andromache*, *Suppliants*, and *Heracles* (Kopperschmidt (1971); Gould (1973); Gödde (2000); Dubischar (2001) 73–7; Bernek (2004)). In most of these altarcentered settings, the supplications are eventually successful (even if initial attempts have failed); only in *Heracles* it is not, but here the hero returns just in time to rescue his family. Other supplications, still marked as such by the appropriate supplication gestures and phrases, take place in profane locations, such as in front of a palace or in a military camp. Interestingly, the success rate among these is lower than among the *Altarflucht* supplications, with failures in *Hecuba* (twice: Hecuba first supplicating to Odysseus, later to Agamemnon), *Orestes* (Orestes supplicating to Menelaus), and *Iphigenia at Aulis* (Iphigenia supplicating to Agamemnon), and with only modest, but at least sufficient success in *Medea* (Medea supplicating to Creon) and *Helen* (Helen supplicating to Theonoe). A variation, or elaboration, of the pattern so common that it can be thought of as a distinct subpattern is the surprising "nonsupplication" in the immediate context of a supplication proper. Here, supplications are expected or even encouraged but do not take place because the "designated" or at least likely suppliants refuse because their courage, pride, or sense of dignity prevent them from stooping to beg for their or their loved one's lives, as in *Hecuba* (Polyxena explicitly, following her mother's failed supplication to Odysseus), in *Helen* (Menelaus explicitly, following Helen's supplication to Theonoe), and in *Iphigenia at Aulis* (Clytaemestra, preceding her daughter's supplication to Agamemnon). The confrontations between Heracles' noble but utterly defenseless family members and the cruel usurper Lycus has strong affinities with these situations, especially since Heracles' family has fled to an altar, but strictly speaking, neither Amphitryon nor Megara supplicate, as Heracles' father instead engages in an argumentative confrontation and the hero's wife is prepared to die with dignity.

The gripping motif of a person's sacrifice or selfsacrifice is repeatedly used by Euripides

throughout his career (Schmitt (1921); O'ConnorVisser (1987); Mastronarde (2010) 206 and 264–70). In most cases, the sacrifice/selfsacrifice dominates only some scenes of the play, but it can also fuel the plots of entire tragedies (*Alcestis*, *Iphigenia at Aulis*). Lives are sacrificed in *Alcestis* (Alcestis), *Children of Heracles* (Macaria), *Hecuba* (Polyxena), *Suppliants* (Evadne), *Phoenician Women* (Menoiceus), and *Iphigenia at Aulis* (Iphigenia). Often it is young people, mostly unmarried girls (*parthenoi*), who are sacrificed, either before the war by their own people to secure victory (Macaria, Menoiceus, Iphigenia), of after the war by the victorious enemy to secure their continued wellbeing (Polyxena). The Trojan infant Astyanax is also killed by the Greeks after their victory, but this barbarous killing is intended to make Troy's annihilation complete, not as a sacrifice. Mentioned above are also two married women (Alcestis and Evadne), who both die for sake of their husbands. Sacrifice and selfsacrifice in Euripides are sometimes not as easily distinguishable as one might expect: Alcestis and Macaria are true "volunteers"; Polyxena, Menoiceus, and Iphigenia have been chosen by others but eventually embrace their fates with such determination that what began as an ordered sacrifice becomes heroic selfsacrifice; Evadne's act, although "voluntary," is strictly speaking not selfsacrifice but rather suicide out of solidarity with her fallen husband. The ethical questions that arise in the extreme situations Euripides constructs around these sacrifices and selfsacrifices—to what extent were they justified and "worth it"?—can be haunting and must be examined in each play individually.

4 The Interplay of Formal Structures and Narrative Patterns

The two preceding sections of this chapter have presented overviews of the principal formal structures and narrative patterns in Euripidean tragedy. Form and plot may be thus separated for analytical purposes. In practice, however, they are closely interrelated and work together. Only in their combination do they achieve the intended powerful artistic effects (Collard (1981) 14–16; Schauer (2002) 165–7). The close link between form and plot in Euripidean drama has not yet been studied systematically and comprehensively. This intricate topic will therefore be addressed in the remaining sections of this contribution. It is hoped that the following observations may give initial orientation for further inquiry.

A simple way to look at the connections between form and plot is to note how certain plot elements are regularly linked to specific suitable formal structures. For instance, when the plot requires that an important event be narrated (because it could not be not staged), the obvious compositional element to turn to is the messenger report. Similarly, extended supplications, as was already mentioned, always play out, in scenes of formal debate in which the three parties involved (suppliant, pursuer, and authority figure/potential rescuer) are pitted against one another in different combinations. Or, as a final example, killings, in which many revenge plots culminate, tend to be staged as taking place inside the *skênê* building, into which the revenge victim has shortly before been lured; the violent action is then compositionally accompanied by the victim's cries from inside and choral comments (Hose (1990) 257–70). This happens in *Hecuba* (Polymestor's sons are killed, Polymestor is blinded in Hecuba's tent), in *Heracles*

(Lycus is killed in the palace), and in *Electra* (Clytaemestra killed in the peasant's house). Variations are in *Orestes* (Hermione upon entering the palace is taken hostage as part of a more complicated revenge plan) and, an even more profound modification, in *Medea* (Jason's bride and King Creon are already in the palace when Medea sends her children inside to deliver the deadly gifts; the subsequent agony and deaths of those first victims are not heard but instead afterward reported by a messenger; the death cries that the audience eventually will hear are those of Medea's children as they are murdered by their mother). When, however, revenge victims meet their fates in the offstage distance, as in *Hippolytus* (along the seashore on the Isthmus) or in *Bacchae* (in the woods of Mt Cithaeron), messengers will later report what happened.

A different approach, however, to studying the interrelationship of plot and form requires recalling Greek tragedy's most basic formal pattern, the mentioned alternation of actors' speaking and acting and choral singing and dancing. This alternating pattern can for the present purposes be thought of as tragedy's "deep," underlying structure (Pfister (1988) 230–1). It should not be overlooked, nor dismissed as a triviality, that this formal pattern also shapes and segments the plot of a tragedy. For tragic plots have to be constructed in such a way that they fit this fundamental pattern of alternating actors' scenes and choral parts. Consequently, plots must consist of distinct "chunks," as it were, that are compatible with the required (and desired) formal breaks between actors' and the Chorus' sections. This does of course not mean that plot phases can only end when episodes end. In fact, important turning points in plots, for instance, crucial discoveries or consequential decisions, often occur in the middle of an episode (Seeck (2008) 50–1). But even in these cases, tragedy's basic formal structure has influenced the organization of the plot in so far as the poet wanted the turning point in the action to occur in the middle of, say, an episode, not at its beginning or its end.

In addition to tragedy's simple and binary underlying structure, however, there is also a more variable and at times turbulent "surface" structure (Pfister (1988) 230–1). It shows itself in the concrete and perhaps considerably modified form in which the compositional units actually appear in a tragedy. The guiding question when analyzing a play's "surface structure" is thus, how has the playwright shaped and also connected the prologue, the *parodos*, the following episodes and intervening *stasima*, and the concluding *exodos*? The "surface structures" of Euripidean (as well as Aeschylean and Sophoclean) plays vary considerably from one another as the poets frequently choose to temporarily change or give up the "deep" regular alternating pattern. The reason for these variations usually lies in the plot, more specifically, in instances where the play's action has so much force or is so drastic that even its formal structure is affected.

Before this feature of Euripidean drama is further investigated, a reminder is necessary: whenever distinctions are made here between regular or "normal" and modified or "special" structures, these attributes are used descriptively, not normatively. No scene or play is artistically superior or inferior because it closely adheres to or strongly deviates from tragedy's basic alternating "deep structure." In addition, some of these "special" structural elements, particularly *amoibaia* and monodies, are so frequent that they, too, and with good reason, have come to be regarded as standard formal units of Greek tragedy (see section 1

above on Aristotle). They are, thus, typologically "special" only in so far as here the basic clean alternation between spoken actors' scenes and musical choral parts has been modified. It must also be noted that two plays, *Iphigenia at Aulis* and *Cyclops*, have mostly (but not entirely) been excluded from the following analyses. The latter is a satyrplay while the former contains several parts of dubious authenticity, and both plays therefore tell us less about Euripidean tragic composition.

To begin the exploration of this topic with a few general observations: No Euripidean tragedy follows the basic formal structure throughout, always with clean divisions between choral parts (*parodos* and *stasima*) and actors' scenes (prologue, episodes, *exodos*). Some tragedies, however, adhere to this pattern least for the most part, especially *Children of Heracles* and to a lesser extent *Medea*, *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, and *Bacchae*. Conversely, there is no tragedy in which every single structural unit has been substantially modified. But the formal structure of some plays, among them *Hippolytus*, *Electra*, *Heracles*, and *Orestes*, is markedly irregular as these plays contain entire sequences of scenes and songs with profoundly changed formal structures. Furthermore, no two plays have identical formal structures overall; in other words, every surviving play is compositionally different and in one way or another unique. Finally, there is no simple linear development in the oeuvre of Euripides, for instance, from a strict and regular form in early plays to more free and modified structural patterns in later plays, or vice versa (Ludwig (1954) presents too simple a picture of formal *saphêneia*, "clarity," as, supposedly, a characteristic of late Euripidean tragedy). Instead, the plays of Euripides present themselves in ever new forms, structures, and compositional dynamics. But even so, synoptic comparisons, as will be offered here, are helpful because they highlight a number of regularities concerning the relationship between plot and form in the tragedies of Euripides.

5 Clear Partition and Alternation between Actors' Scenes and Choral Parts

Greek tragedy's basic structural pattern of actors' scenes alternating with choral parts suggests and oftentimes manifests itself in a clear and strict formal separation between these two types of theatrical presentation. These clean compositional partitions, however, should not be underestimated as formulaic and uninteresting, as a mere default pattern on which Euripides falls back whenever nothing "exciting" happens in the plot. On the contrary, even when a play's composition closely adheres to the basic formal alternation, there may still be specific artistic reasons that have led to this compositional choice, as the following examples will suggest.

The prologues of *Alcestis*, *Children of Heracles*, *Suppliants*, *Heracles*, *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, *Helen*, *Orestes*, and *Bacchae* are entirely spoken scenes, with no space allotted to more agitated elements like *amoibaia* or monodies. The absence of such compositional enrichment keeps the prologues short. Consequently, five of these spokenonly prologues are among the six shortest opening scenes in Euripidean drama: *Suppliants* (41 lines), *Bacchae* (63 lines), *Children of Heracles* (72 lines), *Alcestis* (76 lines), *Heracles* (106 lines); the sixth

short prologue is that of *Hecuba* prologue (97 lines), which in fact does contain a monody but is kept brief nevertheless because Hecuba's suffering will continue to be exposed in the scenes to follow. The three longer entirely spoken prologue scenes are those of *Iphigenia among the Taurians* (122 lines), *Orestes* (139 lines), and *Helen* (163 lines), and again a reason can be detected for this compositional choice. The plots of these three tragedies spring from particularly complicated circumstances that require an elaborate exposition and even the early establishment of a second major plot line or character in the prologues' second parts. The mood in the eight allspoken prologues is subdued as they feature somber tableaus of altar supplication (*Children of Heracles*, *Suppliants*, *Heracles*, *Helen*; only the altarsupplication opening of *Andromache* is more agitated) or other particularly gloomy situations (*Orestes*, *Iphigenia among the Taurians*).

With regard to the tragedies' subsequent episodes, one notices that those that come in the most basic episodic form (actors speaking, framed by choral song) also feature a relatively self contained action. This is the case for several debate scenes (first episodes: *Children of Heracles*, *Andromache*, *Bacchae*, second episodes: *Medea*, *Andromache*, *Suppliants*, third episode: *Trojan Women*), also for a considerable number of messenger scenes (first episode: *Alcestis*, second episode: *Hecuba*, third episodes: *Suppliants*, *Electra*, *Orestes*, fourth or later episodes: *Medea*, *Children of Heracles*, *Hippolytus*, *Heracles*, *Ion*, *Phoenician Women*, *Bacchae*), and for scenes featuring "episodic characters" who have one appearance only, usually arriving unexpectedly and giving the plot a new direction (Creon and, later, Aigeus in *Medea*, Macaria in *Children of Heracles*, Iris and Lyssa in *Heracles*, Menoiceus in *Phoenician Women*). While scenes of these three types may also occur as parts of longer and more complex episodic structures, that is, of episodes consisting of two or more distinct "scenes" (usually demarcated by entries and exits of characters; cf. Aichele (1971) 47–8), their prevalence among the Euripidean selfcontained scenes that coincide with episodes.

Many *stasima*—but not the choral entry songs—also are clearly delineated units that serve as weighty interludes and separators between episodes. The repetitive regularity of *stasima* has an important function as it often contrasts with and balances substantial formal variations that may occur in the intervening spoken and acted scenes. It is especially in the tragedies' long middle sections, in other words, in the stretch between the prologue *parodos* opening and the *exodos* scene, that the choral *stasima* provide predictable and consistent pauses of comment and reflection, resting points, as it were, in surroundings that can be quite turbulent.

In some tragedies, all the *stasima* have even preserved their standard form as clearly delineated choral odes: *Alcestis* and *Children of Heracles* (each with four *stasima*) as well as *Trojan Women* and *Iphigenia among the Taurians* (three *stasima* each). In the majority of the plays, however, the final or final two episodedividing choral songs are substantially modified (see section 8 below). However, even here the earlier *stasima* adhere to Greek tragedy's basic alternating pattern, such as the first two *stasima* in *Orestes*, the first three *stasima* in *Hippolytus*, *Hecuba*, *Electra*, *Heracles*, and *Ion*, and the first four *stasima* in *Medea*, *Andromache*, *Suppliants*, *Phoenician Women*, and *Bacchae*; an exception to this pattern is *Helen*, a play that has a unique structure also in other ways (Kannicht (1969); Allan (2008)).

A few minor formal variations even among the "regular" *stasima* are noteworthy: for instance, *Alcestis*' first *stasimon* ends in an unusual anapestic tag (238–243) that carries on the thought of the *stasimon* proper. In addition, *Alcestis*' first *stasimon* (213–237) and *Suppliants*' second *stasimon* (598–633) are lyric exchanges between two halfchoruses (*hêmichoria*), as are, incidentally, also the *parodoi* of these plays. The *hêmichoria* are formally wellsuited to capture and contrast divergent responses by Chorus members in acute crises (on this kind of "dialogization" of choral odes see Rode (1971) 100–101; Collard (1975b) 179; Swift (2006)).

The relatively regular external form, however, of Euripidean *stasima* still leaves ample room for both functional and even finer compositional variations. They depend on where odes are placed in the plot, as different contexts, such as firstepisode expositions, intrigues, self sacrifice, messenger reports, debate scenes, or action pauses and plot retardations, are reflected in different formal features. Additional characteristics of choral odes emerge in a small group of tragedies whose Choruses play particularly prominent roles, namely, *Suppliants*, *Trojan Women*, *Hecuba*, and *Bacchae* (Hose (1991) 223–403).

6 Blending or Interlacing of Actors' Scenes and Choral Parts

Alongside the comparatively lucid structures discussed so far, every Euripidean tragedy also contains passages where the formal structures break away from and, typologically speaking, complicate the underlying "deep structure" of the regularly alternating choral songs with dance and actors' speaking and acting. It is here that we find the greatest degree of formal variation in the plays of Euripides. Therefore the following synopsis will again leave many fascinating features of individual scenes or passages unmentioned. What is attempted here is no more than to point out certain recurrent patterns that even these seeming "irregularities" reveal upon closer inspection and to emphasize, here too, the relationship between formal structures and plot dynamics.

Most of these "irregular" structural elements in Euripidean drama can be understood, typologically speaking, as resulting from changes to the basic alternating formal pattern of Greek tragedy. If, for instance, a *stasimon*'s complexity is increased, so as to also include an individual actor (or actors), the result is an *amoibaion*. If, on the other hand, a *stasimon*'s complexity is reduced and it loses its characteristic strophic structure, then shorter and structurally simpler choral interludes are created that may have the form of a lyric *astrophon* (nonstrophic song; cf. Rode (1971) 91–94; Hose (1991) 12–15) or of an anapestic choral piece. Similarly, a play's actors' scenes, that is, prologue, episodes, and *exodos*, can be formally modified as well. For instance, actors may switch from the usual speaking in iambic or, occasionally, trochaic meters to the emotionally and stylistically more elevated mode of the anapestic "recitative" (Mastronarde (2002) 75), or, artistically and emotionally even more charged, to outright singing, resulting in actors' "monodies." If the Chorus, or even the Chorus and an additional actor, should be involved in either of these elevated forms, we have, once again, an *amoibaion*.

Thus, the three main elements that typically emerge when a tragedy's formal structure moves away from the basic alternating pattern are *amoibaia*, monodies, and choral interludes. Among them, *amoibaia* are the most frequent (also in Aeschylus and Sophocles) and also the most flexible form, allowing for the most structural variations (Popp (1971) 261–273; Schauer (2002) 317–20). What these three forms have in common, however, is that they blur the compositional boundaries between actors' scenes and choral parts.

Structural modifications and complications of this kind do not occur at random in Euripidean tragedies. Instead, they are closely tied to the plays' plots. Compositional "irregularities" of this kind regularly emerge in contexts where the plot and stage action are, in one way or another, exceptionally intense and emotionally charged, so much so that they appear to stretch, bend, or even break the underlying regular alternating pattern. This is often the case in the context of, first, the initial exposition of a principal character and his/her situation; second, the portrayal of intense distress and suffering; third, violent action backstage (in the *skênê* building); and, fourth, plot acceleration. These dynamics now deserve a closer look.

7 Initial Exposition of the Principal Character and His/Her Situation

Aristotle's typology of Greek tragedy's compositional parts (see section 1 above) categorically distinguishes between the prologue (opening scene with actors only) and the *parodos* (choral entry song). The text layouts in our printed editions tend to reinforce this distinction even visually. And there are good reasons for stressing the differences between these two formal elements because they do reflect Greek tragedy's "deep structure." However, this stark categorization should not make us blind to the fact that on the "surface" Euripidean playopenings usually aim for a very different compositional dynamic, one that works against the rigid dichotomy of prologue and *parodos*.

First, the boundaries between prologue and the *parodos* are often compositionally blurred. Euripidean plays usually begin with an exposition that establishes a strong focus (Heath (1987) 90–7) on a principal character who is in a deplorable or desperate situation and has much reason to grieve or to fear. To heighten the theatrical and emotional effects even before the Chorus enters in the *parodos*, a number of prologues at some point already change their form from iambic speech to a more agitated *amoibaion* (*Medea*, *Hippolytus*) or to a solo recitative or even a monody (*Andromache*, *Hecuba*, *Electra*, *Trojan Women*, *Ion*, *Helen*, *Phoenician Women*). This formal modification, remarkable in itself, is usually tied to other changes as visual, thematic, and formal features of the prologue's second part are then carried over into the *parodos* (Schmidt (1971); Collard (1981) 14–15; Hose (1990) 40–181). The choral entry song can then also be modified so as to become an *amoibaion*, with the continued participation of the principal character who thus remains at the center of the audience's attention (*Medea*, *Hecuba*, *Electra*, *Trojan Women*, *Ion*, *Helen*). Other *parodoi* follow entirely spoken prologues but are likewise *amoibaia* between the Chorus and the central character who has been on stage already during the prologue (*Children of Heracles*, *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, *Orestes*).

Even when a purely spoken prologue precedes a purely choral *parodos*, the two structural units can still be linked through figural and thematic continuities (*Andromache*, *Suppliants*, *Heracles*; in *Suppliants* the Chorus is even present from the beginning).

The only Euripidean tragedies where the prologue and the *parodos* are not in any of these ways linked are *Alcestis*, *Phoenician Women*, *Bacchae*, and *Iphigenia at Aulis*. There are reasons for these more pronounced divisions: in *Alcestis* and *Bacchae* the prologue speakers are divinities who fittingly leave before the *parodos* begins; *Phoenician Women* and *Iphigenia at Aulis* have Choruses whose status makes them more detached from the action, and in both these tragedies the stage is vacated after the prologue. In all other instances, the effect of the mentioned modifications is clear: spectators in the theater will perceive the Chorus' entry in the *parodos* not as a deep and sharp compositional break but rather as a smooth transition and organic development that retains and reinforces the momentum and focus established in the prologue (Schmidt (1971) 2–3; Hose (1990) 166–7).

Another common compositional feature of Euripidean prologues makes them even more "un Aristotelian." Many prologues—the only preserved exceptions are *Suppliants* and *Bacchae*—are in themselves divided into two sections of very different compositional and theatrical character, an opening prologue *rhêsis*, that is, a speech or monologue, and a subsequent (spoken and/or amoibaic) dialogue section (Schmidt (1971) 34; Erbse (1984) 291). Plays of Euripides generally begin with a factual orienting narrative that is calmly, sometimes somberly, delivered by a prologue speaker who is wellinformed but usually not centrally involved in the tragedy's ensuing conflicts and actions. A change in the character configurations on stage—brought about by the exit of the prologue speaker or/and the entrance of (an)other character(s)—in most cases then ends the prologue's unperturbed *rhêsis* part and marks the beginning of the prologue's dialogical section, which is characterized by more enlivened exchanges and action.

In short, the typical Euripidean prologueparodos complex reveals two "unAristotelian" features (Schmidt (1971) 1–3): first, a compositional break already within the prologue and, second, a smooth and organic transition from prologue's latter part to the *parodos*. Both features help provide a rich and organically coherent presentation of the figure of the protagonist and his/her initial situation.

8 Intense Distress, Violent Backstage Action, Plot Acceleration

Apart from the intended dynamics of the opening sections of many tragedies, there are also other plot contexts in which the regular alternation between actor scenes and choral parts is in one way or another modified. What these contexts have in common is that they feature situations that are drastically derailed. They are dominated by intense distress and suffering, by backstage violence, or by a marked plot acceleration as disastrous events are unfolding. It is, again, as if the situational and emotional forces that are set free in these situations can no longer be compositionally contained in Greek tragedy's "normal" and reasonably balanced

alternating formal pattern and instead breaks free and creates new forms that better capture and convey the situation's intensity.

Great pain and heavy mourning can occur in Euripidean tragedy in a number of different places. They are frequently at the center of a play's first episode, as the problematic situation laid out in the prologue *parodos* complex is aggravated due to new developments (Aichele (1971) 74–5; Hose (1991) 99; Dubischar (2001) 255–6). But intense distress and lamenting can also occur in any of the later episodes in reaction to more terrible news or events, and even as late as in the *exodos* scene in the aftermath of the main catastrophe. Such peaks and high plateaus of tragic distress (Heath (1987) 11–16) most characteristically manifest themselves in the emotionally charged forms of *amoibaia* or monodies (Schauer (2002) 317–20). There are, however, further patterns worth noting. It was already mentioned that a good number of prologues end on a pathetically elevated level, with, still in the prologue, an *amoibaion* or monody following a calmer iambic opening section. Interestingly, later episodes tend to invert this dynamic as Euripides here generally moves from *pathos* to *logos*. In other words, beginning with the first episode, emotionally heightened *amoibaia* or monodies not uncommonly start off a spoken scene. These determinedly emotional passages are then, with great contrast and theatrical effect, followed by sections of restrained and "rational" iambic speech or dialogue, in which the situation that had prompted the initial emotional response is further contemplated or deliberated (Heath (1987) 126–7). This pattern can be found, in some plays more than once, in *Alcestis*, *Hippolytus*, *Andromache*, *Hecuba*, *Suppliants*, *Electra*, *Heracles*, *Trojan Women*, *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, *Helen*, *Phoenician Women*, and *Bacchae*.

Extreme violence, of which there is also no shortage in the stories of Greek tragedy, was not openly staged in the Athenian theater. Instead such action was, as mentioned above, relegated to a faraway place offstage, in which case a messenger afterward reports what has happened, or backstage inside the *skênê* building. Backstage violence deeds usually receives realtime coverage, so to speak, through "acoustic staging" as loud cries from within give the audience a clear enough understanding of what is hidden from their views (Arnott (1962) 134–8; Joerden (1971) 402–3; Hose (1990) 257–70). This way, these drastic events, even if not seen, still make a strong scenic impression acoustically. In such climactic situations, the regular alternation of choral odes and spoken scenes is temporarily replaced by brief but powerful amoibaic structures, involving the Chorus who react to what they hear, that are integrated with great sophistication into the larger formal context: the audience hears deathcries in *Medea* (1270, 1271–2, 1277–8), *Heracles* (750, 754), and *Electra* (1165, 1167), neardeath cries in *Orestes* (1296, 1301, perhaps 1347), horrified cries from a killing's bystander in *Hecuba* (1037) and *Heracles* (multiple lines in 886–907), and cries in agony of a figure being blinded in *Hecuba* (1035; also, by the way, in *Cyclops* 663, 665). A related phenomenon occurs when powerful forces that will later in the play unleash their destructive powers make themselves heard frighteningly from inside the *skênê* as is the case with Medea (*Medea* 96–172) and Dionysus (*Bacchae* 576–603).

In most Euripidean tragedies, the plot accelerates toward the end. This is to be expected because narratives, once they have reached their climax, generally move more swiftly and in

one continuous push, as it were, through the remaining phases of the denouement. But more specifically, in many plays by Euripides the dramatic situations keep changing repeatedly in surprising or shocking ways even in the postcatastrophe phase when further unexpected revelations are made to which the plays' characters then immediately react. This increase in narrative momentum, again, works against the moderate pace of a more regular alternation of actorial speech and action and choral odes of reflection or comment (Kremer (1971) 117–22; Collard (1981) 15). Therefore, the formal units in which these turbulences play out are, often in rapid succession, late messenger reports, visually powerful entries or *ekkyklêma* tableaus that display the reported disaster's horrible results, *deus ex machina* epiphanies (all of these are spoken scenes), as well as shorter *amoibaia* and choral *astropha* (nonstrophic interludes).

These features, which usually occur in some kind of combination, make it notoriously difficult to arrive at clean structural analyses in the later sections of Euripidean plays (as Lesky (1983, orig. 1972) regularly stresses in his analyses of Euripidean plays). At the heart of these difficulties usually lies the impossibility of determining what exactly should be regarded as the tragedy's last stasimon. For it is frequently not clear whether a choral *astrophon* or an *amoibaion* with choral involvement is better understood as having replaced, and is now functioning, as a *stasimon* or simply as a more pronounced structural divider within a larger and more complex episode. In such ambivalent cases, therefore, the question where the last episode ends and where the *exodos* begins cannot definitively be answered. It is more helpful instead to acknowledge that this recurring difficulty is "systemic" and that it reflects Euripides' fondness of blending together what are customarily thought of as the three distinct "Aristotelian" closing elements of a Greek tragedy—the last episode, the last *stasimon*, and the *exodos*. A larger compositional compound is thus created that ends a tragedy effectively, as its accelerated plot and structural blending are well suited to hold the audience's attention until the very last line.

9 Conclusion

The preceding analytical survey had two main goals: first, to give an overview of the formal structures and narrative patterns on which Euripides frequently relies; and second, to demonstrate that, and how, these structures and patterns, while they may be analyzed separately, are in practice closely interrelated, each strengthening the effect of the other. It should also have become clear that the many preexisting compositional elements from which Euripides builds his plays are flexible enough not only not to inhibit but, on the contrary, to allow for and encourage their creative and everinnovative use.

Experienced readers of Euripides may easily think of additional fascinating aspects of formal structure or plot composition in this poet's oeuvre that were left unmentioned here, for instance, the artful combination of two plots in *Hippolytus* and *Hecuba*; the relative passivity of the main characters in *Trojan Women*; the Chorus' angry speech(!) in *Heracles*, the remarkably long second episodes in *Iphigenia among the Taurians* and *Helen*, the particularly eventful finale of *Orestes*—more examples could without difficulty be added for every

Euripidean play. But these and many other interesting compositional features of individual plays go far beyond the scope of the present study. However, even they can best be analyzed against the background of the more common "standard" elements. In any case, whether one should be more interested in a synoptic view of typical compositional features of Euripidean tragedy or in recognizing what is compositionally unique in individual plays, familiarity with the principal formal structures and narrative patterns is indispensable for an informed appreciation of the craftsmanship and art of the playwright Euripides.

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FURTHER READING

Pfister (1988) provides a wealth of descriptive (not normative) models and terminology for the analysis of dramatic forms, structures, and patterns of many kinds. The once authoritative formulation of “classical” dramastructure by Freytag (1968, orig. 1863) can instructively be contrasted with Pfister in order to throw into sharp relief “nonclassical” traits in Euripides. For Aeschylean and Sophoclean play composition, Taplin (1977) and Webster (1969) are still fundamental. For those with German, the structure of Old/Aristophanic comedy, which profoundly differs from that of tragedy, is summarized in Möllendorff (2002, 14–35) and Zimmermann (2010). A more recent trend is the analysis of genre developments through systems theory. From this angle, the structural patterns in Euripides could be viewed as manifestations of tragedy’s continuous generic evolution and differentiation. No such study of Euripides yet exists, but Gansel (2008) and (2011), both in German, may point the way. Finally, the power of Euripidean and, generally, Greek tragedy’s formal elements and plot structures is also attested by the parodies they have elicited; from Aristophanes, especially in *Women at the Thesmophoria* and *Frogs*, to Woody Allen’s film *Mighty Aphrodite* (1995).

CHAPTER 26
The Theater of Euripides

David Kawalko Roselli

Discussions of "theater" range among the kinds of things said by characters to the shape of the orchestra. Despite the polyvalence of the term, there is nonetheless a tendency to undervalue material aspects of dramatic performance before live audiences. Thus the study of Euripides' "theater of ideas" (Arrowsmith (1963); see also WinningtonIngram (1969), Michelini (1987)) may attend to fragmentation in literary characterization and signs of cultural crisis. More explicit attention to tragic production and performance (e.g., Hourmouziades (1965), Halleran (1985), Taplin (2003)) unveiled previously unexplored aspects of the theater. These days an understanding of stagecraft and performance has become increasingly recognized as necessary for the study of ancient drama. Nonetheless, critique of the social and ideological conditions of theatrical performance can contribute much to these discussions and perhaps suggest different narratives about Euripides' theater.

Dramatic performance was defined through the fundamental relationship between audience and performers. Transformations in what was heard and seen on stage were driven in part by spectators' interests, emerging professionals eager to display competitively their innovative techniques, poets' receptivity to these developments, and the institutional organization of the theater. Whereas broader aspects of daily life including the role of citizenship, democracy, and empire have played a major role in interpretations of Euripides, this essay aims to deepen our understanding of these aspects and to explore how our knowledge of performance conditions, changes in musical and acting styles, and the use of technology can open up new perspectives on Euripidean drama.

1 Theater Industry and Audiences

The big news in the Classical theater was the increase in the number of theatrical spaces and dramatic festivals. In addition to the festivals in the city, by 400 BCE there is direct evidence for theatrical performances in at least fourteen Attic demes; by 340 BCE there were performances in at least twentythree demes (Csapo (2010) 103)—in both cases, although available evidence is presently lacking, the actual number is certain to be much higher. Theatrical performances also spread throughout the Greek mainland, Sicily and S. Italy, the Aegean islands, Asia Minor, the Black Sea region, and North Africa: 116 sites outside Attica by 300 BC (Csapo and Wilson (2015)). Some fifthcentury theaters (e.g., Thorikos) had stone seating, but like the Theater of Dionysus in Athens most consisted of little more than a staging area and an available slope for spectators (Goette (2007); Papastamativon Moock (2015)). A wooden stagebuilding (*skênê*) provided a backdrop for the plays and a space for performers and stagehands (Aristotle *Poetics* 1449a19–20; see Rouveret (1989) 65–127). The Chorus performed in the space framed by a low wooden stage and rows of marble blocks

of frontseating (*prohedria*) (cf. Aristophanes *Wasps* 1342–44); the single representation of an actor performing before an audience depicts a stage in front of which sit two seated figures (Attic redfigure chous, circa 420 BCE, Painter of the Perseus Dance (Athens BΣ 518); see Hughes (2006)). In the primary viewing area (*theatron*), spectators typically sat on wooden benches constructed by entrepreneurs who leased the space from the state (Csapo (2007)).[1] Theaterleasing explains in part the rather extraordinary step taken in Athens to charge spectators (including citizens) an entrance fee to sit in the *theatron*. In this arrangement, the state farmed out repair work on theater buildings and the construction of seating to lessees who stood to make significant profits.

Viewing practices were closely connected with finance, but not everyone had to pay for seating. The state awarded foreign benefactors, civic, and religious officials with the honor of free seating. Additionally, the city made distributions of public funds (*theorika*) to citizens for attendance at the dramatic festivals on an ad hoc basis starting most likely around the middle of the fifth century (Roselli (2011) 87–117; Wilson (2011) 38–43; cf. Rhodes (1993) 514). Additionally, the location of theaters on the slopes of hills provided space for additional spectators beyond the limited capacity of the *theatron*. These unofficial viewing spaces were free and available to everyone. In a fifthcentury comedy Cratinus refers to such a space in the Theater of Dionysus as the "view from the poplar" (fr. 372 KA). Judging from the archaeological evidence for deme theaters, similar arrangements were common throughout Attica (Roselli (2011) 63–75).

Such viewing spaces facilitated the participation of perhaps thousands of poor and non citizen theatergoers. While some impoverished citizens doubtless used their *theorika* for other purposes and watched from the poplar, free and unregulated viewing spaces were available to metics, slaves, and even women. The social and political elite were prominent in the theater—from civic officials to foreign benefactors and wealthy choral sponsors (*khorêgoi*)—but the poor, metics, foreigners, slaves, and women perhaps constituted the majority of the audience (Roselli (2011); see also SchnurrRedford (1995); cf. Sommerstein (1997)). Given the varied interests, values, and experiences of this motley group, framing drama in Athens exclusively in terms of citizenship or democratic culture and politics may be too narrow a focus (see e.g., McClure (1999); Goldhill (2000); Wilson (2009); cf. Griffith (1995); Rhodes (2003); Carter (2011)).

Changes in the financial organization of the theater made drama more consumerdirected (Csapo (2004) 210–212; Wilson (2008)). Private elite patronage was increasingly diluted by funding from the state without displacing traditional patrons. Higher amounts of pay and the increasing number of festival jobs enabled performers to become professionals; an important result was the gradual diminution of "amateur" actors and musicians drawn from elite families with longstanding ties to the theater (Csapo (2004) 209–210, (2010) 85–89; Wilson (2008) 106–108). Tensions emerged between amateur and professional (paid) performers: at stake was control over public performance.[2] The ability of performers to live off their theatrical profession challenged traditional arrangements in dramatic production and contributed to increased attention to performers' techniques, especially in the context of the *competition* among performers at dramatic festivals. The institution of actors' contests in 449 BCE at City

Dionysia and around 432 BCE at the Lenaea was symptomatic of the emerging status of actors: these performers were officially recognized as a component separate from poets and Chorus. Actors could win first prize for performances in unsuccessful productions, thus demonstrating a certain autonomy for performers.[3] Such incidents suggest a certain applicability in the fifth century of Aristotle's later observation that actors could have more sway than poets (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1403b31–35; see further Hall (2007)). At any rate, in the early fourth century actors were already organizing troupes and managing performances themselves (*IG* II^2 2318.201–203; Csapo (2010) 106–107; see further Nervegna (2014)). Of particular importance for the study of Euripidean drama is its openness to the rising popularity of new styles of performance.

2 Social Change and Innovation in Euripides

Foreign professionals, "workingclass" or banausic according to ancient critics (e.g., Aristotle *Politics* 1341b14), helped popularize new kinds of music in the fifth century. The socalled New Music was defined in relation to traditional kinds of music and "characterized by innovation, variety, versatility, and a highly 'theatrical' performance style" (Csapo (2004) 212; see also Wilson (1999), (2002); D'Angour (2006), and in this volume; LeVen (2014)). As a result of its receptivity to New Music, Euripidean song became more complex, polymetric, and astrophic; words were increasingly subordinated to musical arrangement. Actors' song and technical skill (*tekhnê*) came to rival, if not overshadow, traditional amateur choral performances (cf. Aristotle, [*Problems*] 918b). Music in later Euripidean tragedy was performed by actors who sang selfcontained New Musical monodies—mixing together different genres (e.g., dithyrambs, nomes)—and danced mimetically (Csapo (1999–2000), (2003), (2008), (2009)).[4] The "hushed" entrance of the Chorus in *Orestes* (136–139) and the ensuing song, in which Electra sings the lion's share (140–207), embodies the shift in emphasis from choral to actor's song. Ancient critics complained that these kinds of changes reflected the "corruption" of performers by (allegedly democratic) mass audiences (Aristotle, *Poetics* 1453a30–33; *Politics* 1341b15–20; Plato, *Republic* 492b–c; *Laws* 698b–701d). Such criticism, while succinctly capturing a certain aspect of the changes and revealing a degree of alienation from contemporaneous cultural production, obscures the active construction of drama to suit the performative demands of new techniques and styles in theater music popular with mass audiences.

In Euripides' *Hypsipyle* (fr. 752 f–h) the New Musical performance of the enslaved Lemnian princess playing the castanets and moving in circular fashion with the Chorus (perhaps also with the aulosplayer) was highly mimetic (Csapo (1999–2000) 419–422; see further Aristotle, *Poetics* 1461b30; Csapo (2004) 213–214). When the Chorus in *Electra* sings of dolphins "(wh)whirling" alongside ships (437), it was likely dancing in circular motion; the melism highlighted the imagistic mimeticism while subordinating words to musical performance.[5] Such devices as alliteration, polyptoton, and anaphora (e.g., *Or*. 1381–92, *Phoen*. 678–681) contributed to the mimetic intensity of performances and evoked cultic songs, thus assimilating tragedy to "choral ritual" (Kowalzig (2007)). Critics, however, assailed New

Music for its excessive emotionalism and barbarism, its rulebreaking and genremixing musical forms that through the Dionysiac imagery of liberation were seen as symbolically in step with radical democracy. The Phrygian eunuch's monody in *Orestes* (1368–1502) exhibits many of these elements and thus "violates" traditional laws (*nomoi*) of music. While usurping the typically elite privilege of singing arias, the barbarian eunuch offers a taunting riposte to such traditional musical patterns (*nomoi*: *Or*. 1426, 1430).[6] Such bold experimentation provides one context to assess the charge in Aristophanes' *Frogs* that Euripides subordinated insurrection among the Athenian citizen sailors (1069–1073), known for their democratic leanings during the oligarchic putsch in 411 BCE (Thucydides 8.72–76). Despite or perhaps *because* of such critical views, new performance styles became more common in late Euripidean drama.

New acting styles emerged in the fifth century. The star actor Kallippides was censured for his gestural realism, and similar mimetic performance styles in Euripides' *Hypsipyle* were playfully mocked by Aristophanes (*Frogs* 1305–28).[7] Technical skill in diction was required for more demanding verbal constructions in New Musical song: with words in thrall to musical expression the actor's delivery had to be more attuned to the rapid shifts in music. A new emphasis was placed on an actor's subtlety and modulation, the ability to "vary the manner of delivery" (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1403b26–33, cf. 1413b14–28; [Plutarch] *Ten Orators* 848b; Csapo and Slater (1995) 265–268; PickardCambridge (1988) 167–171). In contrast, traditional actors were ridiculed for their "deepgroaning" and "roaring" performances (Timotheus, *PMG* 791.218–220; Demosthenes 18.262, Pollux 4.114; see further Hall (2006) 296–304).

Performance techniques and new tragic roles opened up a space for the articulation of class difference. By imitating the gestures of lowerclass women, Kallippides introduced social difference through acting style (Csapo (2010) 133–134). In his role as temple slave, Ion describes his labor of sweeping and cleaning Apollo's temple (e.g., 120–122) while singing a New Musical monody; in the encounter with birds defecating on the offerings (107, 177), the actor was enabled, if not encouraged (given new acting techniques and styles), to perform with animated movements and mimetic gestures (cf. Demetrius *On Style* 195). Euripides' enslaved yet outspoken Ino was notably performed with groveling gestures (*Ino* fr. 413; cf. Aristophanes, *Wasps* 1413–14). Effective use of mimicry and tone could also be used to differentiate social status among elite and humble characters (e.g., *IT* 260–339); the star actor Theodorus was praised for his skill in maintaining the "voice" of the speaker in question (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1404b20–23). Claims about intermixing genres in Euripides (e.g., "tragicomedies") may reflect attempts to develop competitively the tragic genre. But mixing the comic with the tragic also enabled, if not required, actors to perform in different registers, while embodying distinct social categories and class values associated with different genres.[8]

Much like the character of Ion, Euripides' ragged heroes have often been framed in terms of the diminution of the heroic grandeur and dignity of traditional elite characters (e.g., Aristophanes, *Frogs* 937–991; Arrowsmith (1963) 37; Collard *et al*. (1995) 23). For example, the rags of Telephus (*Tel*. fr. 697, 698; cf. 712a), Electra (*El*. 184–187; cf. 107), or Menelaus (*Hel*. 416–

424; cf. 554, 1204) show elite heroes in shabby garb associated with low social status and poverty. To judge from Aristophanes, these characters were contentious and popular (e.g., *Acharnians* 411–434) and involved such actors as Kallippides performing "upon the ground on the floorsweepings" (Aristophanes, *Women Seizing the Skenas*, fr. 490; see Green (2002); Csapo (2010) 119–120). In addition to marking poverty and misfortune, especially of veterans, as political issues (Cecchet (2015)), such roles engage with issues of social identity and class difference, while exhibiting an interest in performance practices. Thus Telephus (*Tel*. fr. 697, 698) exhibits an awareness of roleplaying that succinctly captures the relationship between actor and character (Cf. Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 440–441; LadaRichards (2002) 395–401). This new role was ideally suited to engage with norms of social cohesion and new performance techniques. (See section 5 below for additional discussion.)

While the modification of delivery, gestures, and costume enabled actors to elaborate social distinctions, Euripidean characters (from elite heroes to lowly slaves) tended uniformly to use colloquialisms and "ordinary" syntactical structures (Aristophanes, *Frogs* 939–942, 1058; Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1404b24–25; Stevens (1976)). A corollary of this decreased emphasis on class difference through linguistic portrayal is the increased rate of the resolution of the iambic trimeter used in dialogue: the resultant speech patterns were perceived to be closer to common everyday speech (cf. Aristotle, *Poetics* 1449a24–27; see Cropp and Fick (1985)). These tendencies contrasted with those of Aeschylus and Sophocles, who used language to differentiate characters rather by class and ethnicity.[9] However, it is worth noting that female characters in Euripides do exhibit some distinctive speech patterns and perhaps a gendered form of argumentation (Sommerstein (1995); McClure (1999); Mossmann (2001); Chong Gossard (2006)). Class and social status, however, were more often characterized through performance style and techniques in Euripides.

Innovations in Euripidean drama in terms of music and acting to a certain extent responded to the interests of audiences and performers. Theaterworkers became more popular. From vasepaintings to terracotta figurines, an emerging emphasis on dramatic performance (rather than the play's mythological narrative) suggests an increased receptivity to the material conditions of production as part of the public's enjoyment of the theater. Evidence from funerary reliefs and inscriptions celebrate the professional status of theaterworkers and honor them publicly (Taplin (1993) 70–78; Wilson (2000) 214–215, (2007); Csapo (2010) 1–82; Taplin and Wyles (2010)). Although ancient critics denigrated the "workingclass" music and the "wageearning" status of actors and musicians (e.g., Aristotle, *Politics* 1341b13–14; cf. PseudoPlutarch, *On Music* 1135c), who hailed increasingly from nonelite and non Athenian families, modern scholars have often misrecognized the changing material and economic forces that gave rise to such performers as signs of spiritual collapse (Arrowsmith (1963) 33–36; di Benedetto (1971) 268–269; Zimmermann (1989)). Conflicting ideas of performance and society reflect rather the flourishing of theatrical work. But innovation was not directed solely by the interests of performers and spectators: wealthy sponsors of choral performance were eager to publicly promote their Choruses (Csapo (2010) 12–23, 30)—the material embodiment of their largesse—and may have contributed to changes in the aesthetic form of tragedy.

3 Formal Matters

The formal articulation of structural elements in Euripides has often grounded critical charges of artificiality and the mishandling of dramatic technique. These assessments, derived by comparisons with other poets (typically Sophocles), can be traced back to Aristophanes and Aristotle (e.g., Aristophanes, *Frogs* 937–1363; Aristotle, *Poetics* 1456a25–32); such discussions were later expanded in the Enlightenment and have continued along diverse trajectories up to the present (Schlegel (1884) 358; Strohm (1957); Zeitlin (1980); Goldhill (1986) 244–286; Michelini (1987) 95–116; Mastronarde (2010) 14; Wohl (2015)). In discussions of formal elements, a preoccupation with unity and the limits of the tragic form has traditionally loomed large. Consideration of performance conditions, however, can significantly reshape this debate by viewing Euripides' formalist tendency as connected with the conditions that gave rise to the importance of professional actors and musicians. While other essays in this volume focus on specific aspects of Euripides' plays (Dubischar in this volume discusses the form and structure of Euripides' plays in more detail), this section attempts to sketch out productive ways of connecting tragic form, performance, and social change.

Unity of plot is a common bone of contention. Dramatic form, especially in Euripides, has arguably more to do with the linkage between aesthetics and politics than perceptions of wholeness. Plays that appear to lack it can be viewed as complex dramatic structures, whose fragmentation opens up different ways of constructing meaning. The perception of disunity in *Trojan Women* or *Heracles* more readily reflects scholars' engagement with plays as texts to be *read* rather than experienced in performance; such allegations uncritically reproduce ancient criticism of Euripides in comparison with the "noble" standard of Sophocles (Aristotle, *Poetics* 1456a25–32; cf. 1453a29–30; see Elsperger 1906; Michelini (1987) 52–69; Mastronarde (2010) 63–87). Rather than lacking unity, such plays emerged as a vehicle for star performers: individual structural elements were modified and expanded better to suit the demands of performers and the changing interests of audiences (Hall (2006) 54–59; cf. Arrowsmith (1963) 39–40). The openness of dramatic structure, in terms of its material effects on the performance, was an important factor in Euripides' rising popularity and contentiousness. Such openness shaped drama in terms of the sociology of performers and audiences, while also constructing a dramatic form through which to critique society and envision the world otherwise (Wohl (2015)).

Euripidean prologuespeeches became showcases for narrative delivery (Hamilton (1978); Michelini (1987) 103–112). Unlike tragic openings with dialogue between characters (e.g., Soph. *Ant*., *Aj*., *OC*) or prologue speeches delivered to another character (e.g., Soph. *El*., *Phil*.), Euripides' prologues typically comprise a monologue delivered by a single character, thus formally marking the start of the performance (e.g. *Alc*., *Tel*., *Med*., *Hec*., *Tro*., *Ion*, *Bacc*.); their selfdetachment and predictable metrical pattern were parodied in Aristophanes' *Frogs* (1182–1250).[10] Nonetheless, the extended focus on a single actor provided an opportunity for actors to display their theatrical prowess: the fourthcentury star actor Theodorus did not allow even a "cheap" actor to appear on stage before him, since spectators were enamored of

the first voice they heard (Aristotle *Politics* 1336b27–30). Prologue speeches occur in earlier tragedy; in Euripides they are more often extradiegetic and proleptically point to the play's denouement. What was perhaps an archaizing tendency in Euripides nonetheless opened up additional possibilities to engage the spectators' affective responses to uncertainties emerging from narrative contortions and thereby induced a certain "cognitive dissonance" among audiences (Wohl (2015) 15, 20; Mastronarde (2010) 107–110). The anapestic openings in *Andromeda*, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, and the fourthcentury *Rhesus* suggest alternatively a more animated and musical prologue. Prologue speeches were likely *added* to other plays by subsequent performers, thus explaining the *double* prologue in *Iphigenia in Aulis* (Hall (2006) 51).

Another formalistic setpiece was the messenger speech. Whereas Aeschylus and (to a lesser extent) Sophocles typically employed a broad range of reporting roles played by characters involved in the dramatic action, Euripidean drama relied both on speeches delivered by socially marginal messenger figures defined by occupation, and on lyric—typically actor's monody.[11] Except for *Trojan Women*, which nonetheless has a number of reporting figures (Talthybius, Cassandra, Andromache), all Euripidean plays include one formal messenger speech. Strikingly, all extant plays after 415 BCE except *Ion* have two. Euripidean messenger speeches become increasingly longer in later plays, use more action verbs (Dickin (2009)), and provide more opportunities for messengers to report while impersonating the speech of other characters (at times, the very characters performed earlier by the same actor now performing as the messenger; Nünlist (2002) 223). While the report's vividness and authenticity was a concern, so too was the "busyness" of the actionpacked delivery that opened up possibilities for mimetic performance and verbal mimicry (de Jong (1991); Barrett (2002); verbal mimicry: Csapo (2010) 126–129). It is thus not surprising that the star actor Nikostratos could be praised for his verbal dexterity and enunciation in messenger speeches (Eubulus fr. 134 KA). The showstopping potential of Euripides' messengers reaches its apogee with the report sung by the Phrygian servant in *Orestes* (Porter (1994) 173–213), which playfully frustrates the suggested revelation of the dead Helen on the *ekkyklêma* (1357–59, 1366). Such trends suggest the rising popularity of these roles with audiences, as demonstrated in artistic representations of messengers in the fourth century (Green (1999)).

Debate scenes between characters became a standard feature of drama. Sets of paired speeches are found in Aeschylus and Sophocles, but in Euripides more attention is drawn to the *making* of speeches (e.g., *Alexandros* fr. 62a, *Hcld*. 474–483, *Supp*. 295–310, *Hipp*. 986–991, *Tro*. 365–367). The beginning of formalized debate (*agōn*) is often marked with a proem and its ending with the departure of the characters (e.g., *Tro*. 940–1032, *Pho*. 465–525). Recognizable rhetorical devices and allusions to contemporary debates foreground the agōn's historical constructedness (Lloyd (1992); Scodel (1999–2000); Barker (2009); Mastronarde (2010) 222–245). Given the variability of its form in Euripides, defining the agōn became a concern for scholars (Strohm (1957) 3–49; Lloyd (1992), Dubischar (2001)), but the resultant critical assessment of the rhetorical flourish of Euripidean debate as artificial (Duchemin (1945); Collard (1975) 59; Lloyd (1992) 2) has been unduly influential. Whereas Athenian legal practices surely influenced tragic debate scenes, the frequent lack of resolution in

Euripides points to the agōn's engagement through performance with the problematization of social and political issues. The agōn between Medea and Jason in *Medea* or between Hecuba and Polymestor in *Hecuba* highlights—not resolves—irremediable differences. In part, these speeches with their carefully calibrated antagonistic positions showcased rhetorical skills, but debate scenes also opened up spaces to explore the very issue of disagreement (Scodel (1999–2000); Barker (2009); Mastronarde (2010) 207–245).

The presence of an arbitrator on stage (e.g. Menelaus in *Tro*., Agamemnon in *Hec*., Demophon in *Hcld*.) made the structure of the agōn similar to theatrical experiences of spectators at a performance (cf. Dionysus in Aristophanes *Frogs*). Audience involvement was thus built into these scenes, but its complicity was intensified as a result of the handling of disagreements.[12] The failure of the agōn as a formal and institutional structure to resolve conflict on stage could serve to implicate the audience directly in the decisionmaking process. More attention was also placed on the individual agents in the agōn and presumably on the actors' performance of these roles. With the socially marginal in Euripides selfconsciously using formal rhetorical devices and thereby underscoring the constructedness of their performance, these debate scenes drew attention to the rise of new agents in society and in drama.

The question of who speaks merits attention. Talkativeness among Euripidean "minor" characters was described by Aristophanes as a "democratic" act (Aristophanes, *Frogs* 948–952; cf. 89–91). A further tendency is rhetorical selfconsciousness among Euripides' socially and politically marginal characters. The Nurse in *Hippolytus* offers one example of a servile character who speaks persuasively (cf. 482, 487–89, 503–505) and incites the noble Phaedra to act on her love for Hippolytus. While suggesting the threatening specter of clever speaking women and slaves, the rhetorical prowess of the socially and politically marginal may have also represented (and perhaps managed) certain utopian desires among nonelite and noncitizen spectators (Hall (1997); cf. duBois (2010) 89). In *Hippolytus*, the Nurse's pragmatism, sophistic argumentation, and disregard for elite conventions may not have alienated all spectators (cf. McClure (1999) 135–141). The influence of the sophists on these trends is undeniable: some of these foreign intellectuals espoused antitraditional relativism and delivered competing arguments on a single issue; some sophists also taught rhetoric for a fee. But money was not always seen as necessary for developing rhetorical skills (e.g., Aristophanes *Eccl*. 243–244; cf. *Hec*. 814–820).

The handling of the Chorus in Euripides is noteworthy for how it was shaped to emphasize dramatic and ritual performance (see also Murnaghan in this volume). For some ancient critics the Chorus was a concerned attendant incapable of action; or it should function as one of the actors, a part of the whole, and participate in the play as in Sophocles but not as in Euripides (PseudoAristotle *Problems* 19.48; Aristotle, *Poetics* 1456a25–27; see further Foley (2003)). In comparison with Sophocles (and Aeschylus), Euripidean Choruses may *appear* more detached and unintegrated with the action on stage (e.g., Σ Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 421; see Mastronarde (2010) 147–151; cf. Aristotle, *Poetics* 1456a29 for the different phenomenon of the incidental choral interlude (*embolima*)). The Chorus, traditionally understood, provides topical commentary to onstage action and meted out conventional knowledge, but increasingly throughout the fifth century Euripidean choral songs contain impressionistic narration with

meandering details and refer to dancing, music, and to other kinds of cultic choral performances both traditional and invented (Csapo (1999–2000) 418–421). The interests of *khorêgoi*, the financial sponsors of Choruses, may have led to such selfreferential showcasing of choral song, thus connecting tragedy with the longstanding tradition of ritual Choruses and intensifying the sense of choral autonomy from the immediate action on stage. But choral references to performance do complicate the received notion of choral detachment.

References made by the dramatic Chorus to other Choruses—in another time, another space—and to choral singing and dancing constitute a type of choral selfreferentiality. Through these mimetic references the Chorus projects itself elsewhere onto other cultic, often Dionysiac, performances (Henrichs (1994–1995), (1996); Kowalzig (2007); Csapo (2008); cf. Scullion (2002)). Although choral projection is also found in Sophocles, albeit to a lesser extent and with fewer references to musical performance, it was quite common in Euripidean drama (Csapo (1999–2000)). For example, reference to the fifty daughters of Nereus in *Iphigenia in Aulis* (1055–57) or the circling aulosloving dolphins in *Electra* (435–436) evokes choral performances connected with Dionysian cult and signifies New Music. The emerging theater business, more consumerdirected and less bound to tradition, was the site of New Musical traditionalism both through religious revivalism and invention. Euripides' increasing preference for (often foreign) female Choruses, at times detached from the dramatic narrative (e.g., *Phoen*., *IA*), may further represent New Musical influence (with its perceived emotional outpourings and volubility) on the construction of plays (Csapo (1999–2000) 424–425; cf. Foley (2003); Mastronarde (2010): 100–104). What may appear as choral "detachment" from the onstage narrative was thus also a sign of the Chorus' *integration* with ritual, its connection with trends in musical performance, and its relationship with audiences and *khorêgoi*.

4 "Metatheater" and Stage Machinery: Theater in Construction

Euripidean formalism has the potential to raise audience awareness of the material and social conditions of performance. Characters' comments about happenings in the world of the play could also be used to draw attention to dramatic structure. When Electra asks, after waiting expectantly for news, "Where are the messengers?" (*El*. 759), the Messenger arrives as if on cue. Such moments as Iphigenia's questioning of the whereabouts of the Chorus right before the parodos (*IT* 64–66) or references to the conventional muteness of extras on stage (*Or*. 1592) draw attention to the construction of dramatic action. In *Iphigenia at Tauris* (902–908) Pylades signals the formal start of the intrigue, and in *Phoenissae* (751–752) Eteocles criticizes traditional forms of (tragic) battle narrative. Euripidean drama refers to performance conditions in circumscribed ways that nonetheless appear to have become conventional.

In discussions of dramatic selfreflection or "metatheater" the *Bacchae* has loomed large. Dressing up as a maenad in order to watch the "choral" spectacle in honor of Dionysus on the hillside, Pentheus the spectator (829) is instructed how to behave (or "act") by the god of the theater, Dionysus, and rehearses his role (925–954; see further 964–965, 1043–47, 1050,

1277). This “play within a play” has been discussed in terms of *Bacchae*’s overall symbolic action and engagement with issues of identity and selfknowledge. These metatheatrical moments engender “selfconscious reflection . . . on the range and limits of truth that the dramatic fiction can convey” (Segal (1997) 216; see also Foley (1985): 205–258; Bierl (1991); Dobrov (2001); Barrett (2002) 102–131). Scholars have also detected comic elements in this scene (Seidensticker (1978), (1982); cf. Gregory (1999–2000)); the “play within a play” may reflect innovations in the tragic genre, while also opening up a space for actors to demonstrate their skills by enabling them to draw on different generic markers. Such scenes of explicit roleplaying are key components in discussions of metatheater yet also relate directly to theatrical production.

The awareness of stagecraft and theatrical conventions was part of watching and presumably enjoying drama (Easterling (1991); Taplin (1996); Marshall (1999–2000); Rosenmeyer (2002); Hall (2006) 52–54, 105–111). Calling attention to traditional dramatic forms emphasized their conventionality, thus potentially defamiliarizing them, and highlighted the performers’ and the performance’s role in creating dramatic action. In *Medea* the role of the Colchean princess and the multiple identities she adopts throughout the play become not simply a Euripidean version of the unyielding Sophoclean “heroic temper” (Knox (1964)), an exploration of gendered roles (Foley (2001) 243–271), or a study in the conflict between reason and passion; this role also highlights the ability of the duplicitous character and the actor playing it to “reinvent the received tradition” (Gellrich (2002) 326). In drawing attention to the constructed nature of drama, metatheater could involve a certain critical component. In Euripides’ *Electra* (487–584), the “reenactment” of the recognition scene from Aeschylus’ *Libation Bearers* critiques the earlier performance and questions the ideological underpinnings of tragic form (Revermann (2006) 100–101; Wohl (2015) 72–76).

Noteworthy is the intensification of internal roleplaying, disguise, and plots of mistaken identity in the later fifth century. In contrast to the earlier plays of Aeschylus, subsequent drama makes these popular themes central to the onstage action with a notable increase found in Euripidean drama (Hall (2006) 53–54; Zeitlin (1980)). These themes were also topical in late fifthcentury comedy (e.g., Cratinus *Dionysalexandros*; Aristophanes *Acharnians*, *Women of the Thesmophoria*, *Assemblywomen*). With the emergence of professional performers, the spread of the theater industry, and the rise of actors in the popular imagination, internal role playing can be viewed as a response, often playful, to the material conditions of performance (Hall (2006) 118–121). This may shed additional light on *Bacchae*—a New Musical showpiece (Csapo (1999–2000) 415). Given the selfconscious (re)invention of archaic aspects of Dionysiac and cultic performance in New Musical productions, the revenge of Dionysus and his choral entourage on Thebes for slandering the god’s lineage offers a withering allegorical response to critics of the popular performance style. In this case, metatheater appears as a means to assert the Dionysiac reverence of New Musical practitioners and enthusiasts against charges of decadence and revolution.

The material conditions of performance also extended to two mechanical devices used onstage. Such stagemachinery foregrounded the role of technology and stagebusiness in the construction of dramatic performance (Newiger (1989); Mastronarde (1990); Hölscher (1994);

Csapo and Slater (1995) 258, 268–272). The *ekkyklêma* or "rolling out device" was a wooden platform on wheels that could be moved through the *skênê*door. Evidence for the *ekkyklêma* in Aeschylus and Sophocles already suggests something more than its use as an "effective tableau" marking a suspenseful moment, but Euripidean drama took full advantage of the *ekkyklêma*'s semiotic potential (Cf. Arnott (1962) 86–87).[13]

In *Hippolytus*, Theseus sets in motion a new course of action after finding the letter (856) on Phaedra's corpse, displayed on the *ekkyklêma*, the spectacle of which serves to remind spectators of her culpability and agency (but not to reveal the spectacle of her death by hanging: 777–783, 802; cf. 786–789). In *Heracles* the bodies of the hero's family are arranged together (cf. 971–1000) and displayed on the *ekkyklêma*, whose evocation of both interior (1038) and exterior (1070, 1089) space underscores the calculated use of the device to show, unsettle, and potentially recategorize onstage action and dialogue (rather than simply to "reveal" interior scenes). Much like adjudicated debate scenes, the *ekkyklêma* also created a miseenabyme with actors momentarily becoming spectators reacting to and engaging with the *ekkyklêma* (e.g., *Hec*. 1049–53) in a way similar to the audience's experience. The machinery was likely used to depict the shackled eponymous heroine of *Andromeda* awaiting rescue (Jouan and Van Looy (1998) 153; cf. Collard *et al*. (2004) 141–142) and perhaps as the scene of attempted murder in *Cresphontes* (cf. fr. 456: Collard *et al*. (1995) 146; Hourmouziades (1965) 104–106), thus indicating that the *ekkyklêma* became a site of intrigue and onstage action.

Recognition of the machinery's expanded usage in Euripides surfaces in Aristophanes' representation of the tragic poet on the *ekkyklêma* in *Acharnians* (408–409). In a discussion of Euripides' "sensational" lame and ragged heroes (e.g., *Philoctetes*, *Telephus*), Dicaeopolis and a slave, internal spectators of the *ekkyklêma* scene, critically explore Euripidean tragic style. The tragic poet Agathon is similarly represented on the *ekkyklêma* so he can compose New Musical song outdoors (*Women of the Thesmophoria* 66–69). In both cases the machinery is connected with the questioning of aesthetic practices, specifically New Music and new styles of performance; the compositional styles of both tragic poets were also characterized in language drawn from the labor of craftsmen (e.g., *Frogs* 819, 881; *Women of the Thesmophoria* 52–57). Euripides' playful withholding of the *ekkyklêma* (*Or*. 1561, 1574; cf. *Hipp*. 808) or its spectacular substitution with the "flying machine" (*mêkhanê*) in *Medea* (1313–16) further points to the selfconscious and strategic use of the machinery.

The *mêkhanê* was a crane used to lift, transport, or lower actors. The device was used sparingly (if at all) in Aeschylus and Sophocles.[14] In contrast with these allegedly more traditional and "noble" poets, the frequent appearance of the machinery in Euripides gave rise to much criticism (Aristophanes, *Peace* 76128; Strattis *Phoenician Women* fr. 46 KA; Aristotle *Poetics* 1454a37–b6; Hourmouziades (1965) 154; PickardCambridge (1946) 51, 127; cf. Mastronarde (1990) 271). The *mêkhanê* was increasingly used for gods' entrances at the end of Euripides' plays (Mastronarde (2010) 181); the *theos apo mêkhanês* (i.e., *deus ex machina*) became proverbial as a questionable means to resolve a complicated plot in the later fifth and fourth century (Alexis fr. 131 KA; Antiphanes fr. 189 KA; cf. Dem. 40.59) and thus formally to conclude the dramatic action. But the *mêkhanê* continued to be used for

spectacular flying entrances (e.g., Perseus: *Andromeda* fr. 124), thus suggesting a continued interest in the possible uses of technology for innovative staging techniques. In the fragmentary *Stheneboea*, the device was most likely used to represent the flight of Pegasus ridden by Bellerophon, who meted out justice and death to Stheneboea in the manner of a *deus ex machina* (Hyp. to *Stheneboea* 12–17, cf. fr. 665a; see Collard *et al*. (1995) 82).[15]

The frequent presence of stagemachinery in Euripidean drama was not merely a means to unsettle epistemological and philosophical beliefs, especially in the case of the *deus ex machina* (Mastronarde (2010) 181–195), or to show off spectacular effects (Hourmouziades (1965), Newiger (1989)). In addition to the focus placed on individual actors and technology, this machinery highlighted the role of stagehands in constructing dramatic spectacle. Comic attention to the craneoperator suggests that the use of the *mêkhanê* involved delicate stage business and the technical—not just physical—skill of professionals (e.g., Aristophanes, *Peace* 174, *Daedalus* fr. 192 KA, Gerytades fr. 160; Strattis *Atalantos* fr. 4 KA). The apparent use of mute characters (i.e., stagehands) to roll out the *ekkyklêma* in tragedy, as elaborated by the speaking roles of slaves in comic scenes of tragic parody, made the labor involved in dramatic production and its agents—stagehands—visible. Through their role in constructing dramatic spectacle, the *ekkyklêma* and *mêkhanê* function as a sign and guarantor of theatrical work with machineryoperators as recognized makers of spectacle; the recognized profession of the stageproperty maker, *skeuopoios*, suggests an increased awareness of the role of these workers (Aristophanes *Knights* 232; Aristotle *Poetics* 1450b16–20). The increasingly semiotic use of stagemachinery and the emphasis on the constructed nature of drama were part of a complex process involving the rise of theater professionals (performers and stagehands) and the interests of larger audiences, as the theater industry became more consumerdirected and less shaped by sponsors. These developments were part of the emerging selfawareness of workers in Athens (e.g., *IG* I^3 1361, II^2 8464; see Roselli (2013)). Euripidean drama was crafted and performed with a sharper focus on those working in the theater.

5 Plum Roles in Euripidean Drama

One way to make sense of these broad changes in theater and society is to consider the emergence of specific roles. As mentioned above, ragged heroes became increasingly common in Euripides (cf. Aristophanes *Frogs* 842) and signified an increasing awareness of poverty in the imperial city (Cecchet (2015) 67–101). Perhaps because this role selfconsciously drew on performance and social conditions, with the "elite" character appearing with the trappings of a destitute commoner, it was also able to incorporate certain comic elements. Thus the ragged Menelaus' rough and potentially humorous treatment at the hands of the doorkeeper (*Hel*. 435–541; Allan (2008) 198–199) evokes similar doorway scenes in comedy.[16] Other examples of this role and its reception reveal an even more strikingly political emphasis.

The virtue of some of these characters resides in knowing their place (e.g., *Ion* 579–606). But others defend their right to speak out and to participate equally in the community, like the popular and often parodied eponymous hero of *Telephus*, thus making these "pauperized" elite

heroes defenders of certain democratic privileges (e.g., *Tel*. fr. 703, 706 (cf. Aristophanes *Acharnians* 497–559, 593–619); *Ino* fr. 412, 413 (cf. Plut. *Mor*. 3.290); *Alexandros* fr. 54, 62i).[17] At the same time, the thematization of disguise in Euripides' *Telephus* helped to turn the eponymous hero into an icon of theatrical roleplaying; in the *ekkyklêma* scene of Aristophanes' *Acharnians* (407–479) Telephus is associated with stagemachinery and theatrical work. These ragged heroes were also mocked for corrupting wealthy citizens, who allegedly dressed up as such characters in pitiable rags and claimed they did not have sufficient capital to serve as public benefactors (Aristophanes *Frogs* 1063–1066). Star actor Kallippides' apparent performance of a similar role (cf. Aristophanes fr. 490) suggests its appeal to a new generation of actors. This stylized role was well suited to address the contested boundaries of the citizen body, as well as the tensions between professional performers and elite "gentleman" actors and between the vested interests of different classes.

Another figure that became popular particularly in Euripides is the elite sacrificial victim. This character, most often female but occasionally male (e.g., Menoeceus in *Phoen*.), appears as part of a larger action unfolding on stage (e.g., *Hcld*., *Hec*., *Erech*.) or as the agent of the central action (e.g., *IA*). In these plays, a social and political crisis is typically averted by the selfsacrifice of a member of an elite ruling family; similar to the Maiden in *Children of Heracles*, these victims serve as a semiotic vehicles for articulating Athens' class ideology (Roselli (2007)). Critics have also discussed the tensions (Foley (1985); McDonald (1990)) and "irony" (Vellacott (1975)) involved in these plays and the apparently unacceptable costs of sacrifice (Conacher (1967); Snell (1968); Rabinowitz (1993); Scodel (1996)). But a consideration of performance requires us to rethink such assessments.

In Euripides, this role was increasingly allotted more song and thereby provided actors with opportunities for innovative, New Musical performance techniques. Whereas Alcestis sings of her death in a brief song, which has strophic responsion and a rather tame metrical schema (*Alc*. 244–272; Parker (2007) 103–112), and the Maiden in *Children of Heracles* outlines her willing sacrifice in iambic trimeter (500–534), Polyxena (*Hec*. 197–215) sings an emotionally wrought song. Lyric anapests and dochmiacs, marked by such features as anadiplosis and polyptoton (e.g., 202–206), heighten the emotionalism of Polyxena's singing. Iphigenia in *Iphigenia in Aulis* shows how the role could be expanded. She sings two arias (1279–1335, 1475–1509); both are astrophic songs with imagistic sound and sense suited to New Musical compositions. Iphigenia refers to "whirling" breezes blown by Zeus (1324) and instructs the Chorus to "whirl" or dance in a circle (1480) around Artemis' altar; the verb, "to whirl", was a shibboleth of New Musical performance and suggests the actor's mimetic movements (Csapo (1999–2000) 422). Despite the apparent selfdetachment of Iphigenia's arias, the New Musical elements and her selfreferential call to the Chorus to dance and join her in song (1468, 1480, 1492) highlight the element of communal performance. Given its increasing popularity, the elite sacrificial victim appears to have become recognized as a suitable role for the emotional and mimetic displays of new performance styles. Such popularity is perhaps reflected in the large number of interpolations in *Iphigenia in Aulis* on account of a tradition of reperformances.

This role further received a new ethical and social emphasis. The discourse of generosity,

munificence, and giftgiving became a leitmotif: the body of the selfsacrificing agent is willingly given to the community for its salvation (e.g., *Hcld*. 549–551, *IA* 1386–89).[18] In return for her selfsacrifice, Polyxena receives a pyre and is showered with leaves; she is thus honored as an athletic victor (Σ *Hec*. 574; cf. Pind. *Pyth*. 9.123–124) and a noble warrior (*Hec*. 346–348). Gratitude (χάρις) was a defining part of this role (e.g., *Hcld*. 548, *Erech*. fr. 360.1–3; cf. *Alc*. 299) and transformed the sacrifice from an obligation into a benefaction. Selfsacrifice became one's willing "gift of death" (*Phoen*. 1013).

Euripides' tragic discourse of benefaction was connected with contemporaneous appeals to public service in forensic rhetoric. Liturgies or "works for the people" ostensibly involved the wealthy using their personal resources to benefit the entire community; the extent to which liturgies actually benefited the poor is, however, disputed (Foxhall (2002) 219; cf. Ober (1989) 199–202). Starting at least in the late fifth century, speakers enumerated their liturgical service to amass esteem and gratitude; they represented their liturgies as gifts bestowed liberally on the state (e.g., Lys. 25.12–13; Ant. 1.β.12; see Wilson (2000) 109–143). The notion of expenditure with one's person and resources (e.g., Lys. 19.58) gave ideological support to the elite gift economy while also evoking the common citizen ideal of service to the state (e.g., Thuc. 2.43.3; Lys. 2.34–36 cf. Thuc. 8.65). Of particular interest for tragic production is the institution of the *khorêgia*, a "work for the people" in which the wealthy funded and organized public choral performance (Wilson (2000)).

The *khorêgos*' complex ideological effects and prominent role in instituting choral performance offer a different yet productive framework for discussing the sacrificial elite. Through her sacrifice Iphigenia presents herself as a public benefactor (*IA* 1446; cf. 1412), yet the common and even humble status of such characters is consistently stressed (*IA* 1121), thus opening a space for the role of the socially and politically marginal.[19] In terms of choral dance, in *Erechtheus* Athena instructs the city to honor the selfsacrificing daughters with festivals and choral dances of maidens (fr. 370.77–80); choral projection involving aspects of Mystery cults, circular dances, and Dionysus further reflects New Music's religious revival and its shaping of imagery in the play (Csapo (2008) 275–280). This relationship between the sacrificial role and (New Musical) performance is also found in *Iphigenia in Aulis*. In addition to Iphigenia's own arias, her selfsacrifice leads to the organization of New Musical dance (1480) and song (1492; cf. 1467), and the performance of cult hymns (1522). Through its gift of sacrifice the ruling family and the marginal members of the household appear as benefactors both in terms of imperialism and elite choral sponsorship. Much like Euripidean ragged heroes, the sacrificial victim and the handling of the action on stage allegorized contemporary social and political antagonisms. The "costs" of sacrifice are thus recast in perhaps unfamiliar ways.

Consideration of New Musical to khoregic performances provides important insight into the construction of Euripides' sacrificial victims. This popular role emerged in tandem with the rise of a new class of performers, new acting and music styles, and an increased receptivity in Euripides to political and social discourses associated with the funding of choral performance (e.g., Aristophanes *Peace* 534, *Frogs* 775). Traditional assessments of Euripidean drama in terms of morality, irony, and the debasement of tragic grandeur should be revised in light of the

interests and desires of professional performers, common workers, wealthy patrons, and diverse audiences in such roles.

6 Theater Beyond Euripides

In 1905 Lenin declared that "the freedom of the bourgeois writer is simply masked or hypocritically masked dependence on the money bag, on corruption, on prostitution" (Lenin (1965) 48). Euripides was no bourgeois, but Lenin's comment suggests the pressing need to interrogate the notion of the independent (tragic) poet. In its discussion of the theater of Euripides, this essay has explored various mediations between the poet as "creator" and the performance in terms of a variety of agents and forces. Euripides' increased openness to new performance styles is the flipside of the agency of actors, musicians, stagehands, public officials, entrepreneurs, *khorêgoi*, and audiences with increasing confidence in their ability to express judgment about theatrical performance. To a certain degree, these agents were able to destabilize authorial agency in Euripidean drama. At the same time, these individual agents were themselves part of broader structural developments. The changing sociological makeup of performers, the increasing importance of actors as semiautonomous "stars," and the state's organization of theatrical performance helped fuel changes in dramatic form and the rising popularity of new tragic roles. Euripidean drama emerges as a response to different cultural and political desires among historically constituted spectators and performers (see further Wohl (2015)). Ancient stories about Euripides' collaborators (Cephisophon: Aristophanes, *Frogs* 944, 1452–53; fr. 596)—some allegedly slaves (Σ Aristophanes *Frogs* 944; *Vita Eur*. 6.2), others radical musicians (Timotheus: Satyrus *Vita Eur*. fr. 39 col. 22)—not only preserve criticism of his tragic style, they may also embody the changing social conditions and point to the role of a new cast of social agents in the theater of Euripides (Roselli (2005), (2013)).

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FURTHER READING

Much of the evidence for ancient theater production is collected and reviewed in the standard reference work, PickardCambridge (1988); the more recent discussion (and translation) of most of this material in Csapo and Slater (1995) is essential. The forthcoming multivolume work by Csapo and Wilson, *Historical Documents for the Greek Theatre down to 300 BC*, promises to provide a more comprehensive study. Csapo (2010) discusses the conditions that gave rise to the theater industry and the professionalization of actors; Wilson (1999, 2002, 2011) focuses on musicians. Stephanis (1988) provides a prosopography of theater workers (in modern Greek) necessary for any consideration of the sociology of performers. Roselli (2011) explores the historical constitution and role of ancient audiences in Athens. For discussion of the connections between politics and performance see Hall (2006); actors and acting: Easterling and Hall (2002). Mastronarde (2010) and Wohl (2015) provide thoughtful discussions of aesthetics and dramatic form in Euripidean drama.

Notes

1 Not all deme theaters (e.g., Thorikos) followed this model: Wilson (2007).x

2 E.g., Pratinas, *TrGF* 4 fr. 3; Ath. 617b–c. See Seaford (2003, 2004, 2008) on monetization and drama; Csapo (2004) discusses the critical responses to New Music..

3 See e.g., the *didaskaliai* from 420–417 BCE (*IG* II^2 2319, col. ii); Csapo and Slater (1995) 136; Millis and Olson (2012) 115.

4 Cf. Agathon and New Music: Aristophanes *Women of the Thesmophoria* 101–129, fr. 178 KA; Csapo (2004) 232.

5 New Music in Eur. *El*. (cf. Aristophanes *Frogs* 1314): Csapo (2003) 71–74, (2009); New Musical dance: Csapo (2008) 280–284. See also Eur. *Or*. 338–344: Csapo and Slater (1995) 341–342; West (1992) 284.

6 Tragic singers: Hall (2006) 288–320; responses to New Music critics: Csapo (2004) 239–240, 247–248. Cf. Zeitlin (1980) 63 for the Phrygian's literary role.

7 Kallippides' acting style: Aristotle, *Poetics* 1461b26–62a14; cf. Plut. *Ages*. 21.4; see Csapo (2002), (2010) 117–139.

8 Genre and Euripides: Elsperger (1906) 4–59; Mastronarde (2010) 44–62; Wright (2005) 6–10. See Aristophanes, *Frogs* 1301–1303 for Euripidean genre mixing; cf. Pl. *Laws* 700d–701a. Genre and class: Aristotle, *Poetics* 1448a1–18, 1448b20–49a6. Wohl (2015) 1–18 discusses the relationship between form and politics in Euripides.

9 E.g., Aesch. *Cho*. 734–765 (Nurse); Soph. *Ant*. 223–236 (Guard), *Aj*. 1128–42 (Menelaus); but cf. Eur. *Stheneboea* fr. 670. See Collard (2005) esp. 358–360; Csapo (2010) 129–133; cf. Gregory (2005) 256–257. Characterization of barbarians in tragedy: Hall (1989) 119–133, (2006) 184–224.

10 The repeated phrase "lost/destroyed an oilflask" in *Frogs* (e.g., 1233, 1238, 1241; cf. Dover (1993) 338–339) may refer to changes in actors' style of delivery; cf. Pollux 4.114 on "oilflasking" as a critical term.

11 Sophocles' extant plays also employ a number of elite characters as messenger figures (e.g., Hyllus in *Trach*., Tecmessa in *Aj*., Neoptolemus in *Phil*.); see Taplin (1977) 80–85.

12 See Barker (2009) 325–365 on the failed institutional management of dissent in *Hec*. and Goldhill (2012) 38–55 for the "audience on stage."

13 See von Möllendorf (forthcoming) for the semiotics of the *ekkyklêma*.

14 Possible uses: Aesch. *Memnon* or *Psychostasia*; Soph. *Peleus*, *Phil*. See Mastronarde (1990) 271, 283, 287, 289; Taplin (1977) 388–390.

15 Cf. *Or*. 1573–75: Orestes appears on the roof (and not on the *ekkyklêma*: 1561–62) as *deus ex machina* to his own drama: Mastronarde (1990) 262–263; Zeitlin (1980) 70.

16 Doorway scenes (e.g., Aesch. *Cho*. 653–658, Aristophanes, *Peace* 180–193): Brown (2000), (2008). See Foley (2008) 28 on Euripidean ragged heroes in response to comic parody.

17 Cf. the elitist spin with the ragged and "wild" eponymous hero of Soph. *Phil*.: Rose 1992: 266–330.

18 Cf. Aesch. *Ag*. 232–237 for the gruesome depiction of Iphigenia tied up, gagged, and held aloft by soldiers; see further Wohl (1998) 59–82.

19 Elite language: e.g., *Hcld*. 503–519; *Erech*. fr. 360.33–36; *Hec*. 346–356, 591–602; *IA* 1376. Humble status: e.g., *Alc*. 282; *Hcld*. 479; *Hec*. 357–366, 552; see further Roselli (2007) 133–148.

CHAPTER 27
The Euripidean Chorus

Sheila Murnaghan

1 Varieties of Choral Experience

Athena and Poseidon have agreed on the next chapter of the Troy story and have left the stage. The old woman who has been lying on the ground lifts her head and begins to sing a bitter song. She is Hecuba, queen of Troy, mourning the loss of her city and the men who had protected it. Shifting her aching spine and cursing the ship that brought Helen to Troy, she calls on the wives of the Trojans to join her lament as their city goes up in smoke. From one side of the stage, a small group of women appears. "Hecuba," they ask, "why do you cry out?" (*Tro*. 153). They have heard her wails inside the shelters where they were waiting and have been pierced with terror. Hecuba and the women exchange anxious questions and bits of news about their imminent departure as captive slaves of the victorious Greeks. Soon another group of women enters the stage from the other side. Trembling, they have left the tents of Agamemnon to hear what Hecuba can tell them about their fates. They too enter into a brief dialogue with her, as she and they wonder out loud which of their Greek captors each will be assigned to. Hecuba falls silent as the two groups combine to sing and move in unison, decrying her pain and shame and imagining their future destinations.

Out of Hecuba's fellow sufferers, the Chorus of the *Trojan Women* has been formed. They will serve as grieving witnesses to the further blows that befall Troy's ruling family until, as the play comes to an end, they share a final antiphonal lament with Hecuba and prepare to disperse.

> HE:
>
> *ottototototoi* –
>
> Son of Cronus, lord of Phrygia, father
>
> of our race, do you see [*dedorkas*] what we suffer?
>
> CH:
>
> He sees [*dedorken*]. But our great city [*megalopolis*]
>
> is no city [*apolis*]. There is no more Troy.
>
> (*Tro*. 1287–1293)

As the plot of the *Bacchae* moves towards its climax, the young Theban king Pentheus is headed to the mountainside disguised as a maenad. He thinks he will be observing the women

who worship Dionysus there; in fact, he is ensnared in Dionysus' vengeful scheme and will himself be at the center of a horrific and deadly ritual in which those women, led by Pentheus' own mother Agave, will tear him limb from limb. Dionysus ushers Pentheus offstage, and the Chorus is left behind. They are a group of Asian female followers of Dionysus, dressed in vivid, exotic costumes. They burst out into an excited song that incites and forecasts the events that will unfold outside the audience's view.

Race, hounds of Madness, race to the mountain,

where the daughters of Cadmus hold their revels,

spur them to frenzy

against the man in women's dress,

the madman spying on the maenads.

(*Bacch*. 977–981)

These vengeful exhortations are oddly mixed with traditional gnomic pronouncements (couched in the first person singular with which Choruses conventionally refer to themselves).

I am not against cleverness,

but I prefer to follow other paths, compelling

and clear, that lead to a welllived life:

remaining pure, day and night,

showing reverence, honoring the gods,

casting out practices that depart from justice.

(*Bacch*. 1005–1010)

Soon a messenger appears and reports in detail on the ghastly events that the Chorus has already summoned up; they respond with a song of triumph.

Now to perform a Bacchic dance!

Now to shout out the downfall

Of Pentheus, child of the dragon race!

. . .

Cadmeian bacchants,

you have achieved a victory worthy of song—

one that will end in groans, in tears.

A brilliant game—to clasp your child

with a blooddrenched hand.

(*Bacch*. 1153–1155, 1160–1164)

These two Euripidean Choruses are poles apart in spirit and style, differing sharply in their level of sympathy for the protagonists, in their consonance with the likely responses of an audience, and—we can imagine—in their costumes, choreography, and music. Together they illustrate the wide variability in Euripides' use of the Chorus, a fundamental element of Athenian drama, which brought to every enactment of a tragic myth the distinct perspectives and expressive techniques of a collective character performing in a heightened mode of song and dance. Both also illustrate the depth of Euripides' engagement with tragedy's choral form: not just his creation of dramatic scenarios in which the trials of individuals are amplified by the responses of groups, whether supportive or hostile, but also his sense of the Chorus as a link to nondramatic poetic traditions and to the origins of drama.

The Chorus of the *Trojan Women* illustrates the close connections between tragedy and lament, with its female performers and patterns of responsive repetition. The Chorus' entrance dramatizes the formation of lament's characteristic configuration of prominent mourner and answering supporters, which is a prototype, and one of the likely sources, for tragedy's combination of individual actors and Chorus. The Chorus of the *Bacchae* reflects tragedy's adaptation of another lyric form, the victory song, here given a jarring twist. The maenad Chorus also reenacts another of tragedy's points of origin, in the worship of Dionysus, the god in whose honor tragedies were presented. In their enthusiasm for the extreme Dionysian rites occurring on the mountainside, this Chorus indicates the link between their own observances and the temporary behaviors of ordinary Theban citizens, the women displaced from their homes and the man dressed in a transformative costume— disturbing echoes of the ordinary Athenians who performed on the tragic stage.

Because of an influential comment in Aristotle's *Poetics*, Euripides has sometimes been seen as contributing to a decline in the importance of the Chorus over the course of tragedy's development. "The Chorus too must be regarded as one of the actors. It must be part of the whole and share in the action (*sunagônizesthai*), not as in Euripides but as in Sophocles. In the others the choral odes have no more to do with the plot than with any other tragedy" (Aristotle, *Poetics* 18, 1456a25–29). Scholars have struggled to understand this stricture, asking what it

means for a Chorus to share in the action with the actors and comparing Euripides' handling of the Chorus with Sophocles'. If Aristotle means that Euripides was a step closer to the practice he claims for his own day of Choruses singing detachable odes ("*embolima*") unrelated to the particular play in which they appear, it was evidently only a small step. Euripidean Choruses do tend more often to embark on songs without making an explicit connection to the preceding action, and some of his later Choruses portray groups of people with no personal connection to the protagonists, such as the maenads in the *Bacchae* (Mastronarde (2010) 145–152). But his Choruses certainly are engaged by the action of their plays, and Euripides and Sophocles are more like each other in their handling of the Chorus than either is like Aeschylus.

Aeschylus' works reflect a somewhat earlier stage in the process by which tragedy evolved from a form of wholly choral poetry through the addition of actors. Most of Aeschylus' plays have only two actors and several have Choruses that are either very prominent (*Persians*) or are actually protagonists in the plot (*Suppliants, Eumenides*). Sophocles is said by Aristotle to have added a third actor, and he and Euripides (as well as Aeschylus in his later plays) make use of three actors, alongside Choruses who are not main characters. Both Sophocles and Euripides were active in the second half of the fifth century and both reflect developments that affected the Chorus during that period, especially the growing prominence of virtuoso actors who performed extensive sung lyrics, often in dialogue with the Chorus.

Against this background of general similarity, distinctive (if not necessarily exclusive) trends can be detected in Euripides' handling of the Chorus: more frequent assignment of Choruses to female than male roles; the use of choral odes to locate particular myths within broad causal chains; attention to choral performance and its loss as tragic themes; the treatment of tragic Choruses in relation to musical history.

2 Choral Sympathies

Fourteen out of Euripides' surviving tragedies have female Choruses; the further three tragedies that are uncontestably by Euripides (*Alcestis*, *Heraclaidae*, *Heracles*) have Choruses of old men. This, along with what can be discerned about lost plays, indicates that Euripides follows somewhat more than the other major tragedians a genrewide tendency to cast Choruses in roles that are socially marginal or significantly different from the performers under the masks and costumes—the performers being drawn from among the most privileged Athenians, male citizens in the prime of life (Castellani (1989) 2–3; Foley (2003) 13–14, 26–27; Mastronarde (2010) 101–03). Only the disputed *Rhesus* has a Chorus representing men of military age (which possibly tells against Euripidean authorship; see the discussion of Liapis in this volume). This preference for marginal choral identities is a notable feature of tragedy, but does not compromise the capacity of Choruses to articulate shared traditions and mainstream cultural values, as when the maenads of the *Bacchae* celebrate a life of moderation and piety (Gould (1996), Goldhill (1996)).

Euripides' use of female Choruses can be related to his extensive and provocative treatment of female characters in general, which is marked by attention to the inner lives of private and

ordinary people and a sense of women as especially vulnerable to onslaughts of strong emotion and to the hardships imposed by tyranny and war. (Mueller's essay in this volume discusses the strands of scholarship concerned with women and gender in Euripides' plays.) In plays depicting the fall of Troy, the *Trojan Women*, and the *Hecuba*, a Chorus of fellow sufferers enlarges and generalizes the wretched lot of protagonists like Hecuba, Andromache, and Cassandra. In those plays, the close identification of Chorus and protagonists is itself a symptom of catastrophe: the fall of Troy levels the city's social structure so that members of the royal family and their former servants are slaves together. By the end of the *Trojan Women*, Hecuba is so overwhelmed by her trials that traditional roles have been reversed and the Chorus is leading her in a lament (Battezzatto (2005) 79):

> CH:
>
> Cry out, our mother! HEC: *aiai*
>
> CH:
>
> Mourn all the dead! HEC: *oimoi*
>
> CH:
>
> *oimoi* it is! For your unforgettable sorrows.
>
> (*Tr*. 1229–31)

In peacetime settings, the social gap between Choruses and main characters remains intact. Figures like Medea, Electra, Phaedra, Creusa, and Helen suffer from unusually difficult, often shameful troubles, in response to which they form intricate and extreme plans. Yet Euripides remains attuned to the bonds that unite a group of ordinary bystanders and connect them to the heroines for whom they become sympathetic listeners and loyal accomplices. He often introduces female Choruses as they turn from routine activities to respond to highplaced heroines with stranger fates. The Greek captives of the *Helen* are doing laundry in the Nile when they hear Helen bemoaning her exile and ruined reputation on the lonely shore (*Hel*. 179–190). The Athenian slaves who have come with Creusa to Delphi in the *Ion* can recognize the myths depicted on the temple there because they have heard them told while working at the loom (*Ion* 196–97). The Argive women of the *Electra* arrive at Electra's farmhouse to invite her to join them in celebrating a festival for Hera (*El*. 167–74).

The friendly concern displayed by these Choruses stems from the shared lot of all women, which the strange plights of the protagonists magnify and dramatize. The Chorus of the *Hippolytus*, a group of Troezenian women, arrives at the palace because they have heard from a friend, who heard it while washing clothes, about the troubles of the Cretan princess Phaedra. They speculate about possible causes in a kind of catalogue of women's misfortunes — possession by a maddening deity like Pan or Hecate, some lapse in the proper worship of Artemis, a husband's preference for another woman, distressing news from a faraway home— ending with the universal suffering of the female in childbirth.

For women, there's a bad, a wretched helplessness

that comes with a jangled nature,

from labor pains and witlessness.

(*Hipp*. 161–63)

None of these suggestions is as strange and terrible as Phaedra's actual problem, a passion for her stepson Hippolytus that is both adulterous and incestuous, yet they point to aspects of femaleness that underlie Phaedra's predicament. Because the female body is permeable, prone to madness and possession by pregnancy and childbirth, Phaedra is the logical point of entry for Aphrodite's show of power, even though it is Hippolytus who has offended Aphrodite and is her ultimate target. Women's isolation in marriage, and the double standard they must live by, help to make Phaedra's feelings for Hippolytus intolerable.

Similarly, in the *Medea*, a strong bond develops between the foreign heroine and a group of Greek women, here women of Corinth, who progress from interested sympathy to general protest. The Chorus is drawn to the palace by the cries of "the unhappy Colchian woman" (*Med*. 132) and Medea comes out to cultivate their support. She casts her plight as an abandoned wife in terms of the universal wretchedness of women, all of whom are like foreigners when they enter their husband's homes, and secures their silence if she comes up with a scheme to get back at her husband Jason. When she develops that scheme, it turns out to involve killing Jason and both the king of Corinth and his daughter, her rival. Yet the Chorus stays steadfastly on her side, focusing on the wrong done to Medea by Jason through his breaking of their marriage oath. Famously, they make this event the basis for a general condemnation of the misogynistic poetic tradition. Now that Jason's perfidy has been revealed, they claim, things will be different:

There will be no more songs of ancient poets

who tell of faithlessness as *my* failing.

The enchanting voice of the lyre was not granted

for the speaking of my mind,

by Phoebus, master of songs. Or else I would have sung

a countersong to the male race. The span of time

has much to tell of both lots, mine and men's.

(*Med*. 421–430)

Despite this high point of solidarity, in which gender trumps local loyalties even in the face of a murder plot, the Chorus is not unwavering in its identification with Medea. Their responses evolve with the action, and they serve as a sensitive sounding board against which the play's audience can measure its own reactions. When Medea decides to punish Jason even more effectively by killing their children, the Chorus simply cannot believe it: "you would become

the unhappiest of women" (*Med*. 818).

When your children fall to the ground and beg you,

you will not be able

to dip your hand in their blood

with a steady heart.

(*Med*. 863–866)

As Medea defies these expectations, the Chorus becomes increasingly bewildered, without relinquishing their sympathy. Like Jason, they find her inhuman, "a Fury" (*Med*. 1260), "rock or iron" (*Med*. 1280), for what she does, yet they keep tying her action to the wrong that was done to her (*Med*. 999–1001) and to the troubles of the marriage bed (*Med*. 1290–92). In their effort to make sense of Medea's extreme behavior, they turn both to myth and to personal experience. In the realm of myth, they can only think of one analogue, Ino, who killed her two sons when driven mad by Hera.

After Medea overcomes her maternal doubts and leaves the stage to kill the children, the Chorus veers away to a general reflection based on their own experience. Through long observation and a kind of wisdom peculiar to women, they have concluded that people who do not have children are happier than those who do. Nonparents do not have to worry about how their children will turn out, or how to raise them, or how they will be supported, and they are spared the worst grief of all: when children turn out well but some god carries them off and they die young.

Where does it get us,

this worst of all cares

on top of the others,

because of our children,

thanks to the gods?

(*Med*. 1012–15)

This account of life's ordinary challenges grounds both the Chorus' closeness to Medea and their distance from her. It underlies their unfailing sympathy, as they mourn Medea's loss of her children: "Your care for your children was given in vain./Did you bear your beloved offspring in vain … ?" (*Med*. 1261–62). But their attunement to parental care, along with the mythical paradigm of child murder as a sign of madness, also throws into relief the singularity and horror of Medea's decision to inflict this loss on herself deliberately, for the sake of revenge.

A longstanding view of the tragic Chorus, first proposed by A.W. Schlegel in his *Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature* of 1808, holds that the Chorus is a standin for the audience: "the ideal spectator," which "mitigates the impression of a heartrending or moving

story, while it conveys to the actual spectator a lyrical and musical expression of his own emotions" (Schegel (1846) 70). The Chorus of the *Medea*, with its stronglyfelt female identity, shows how this model has to be qualified in order to be useful. Their role is largely one of listening and reacting, but they do not correspond straightforwardly to the play's audience. It is not certain that there were women in the original Athenian audience, and many critics argue that, even if there were, tragedy still addressed itself primarily to men (Goldhill (1997) 62–66). The Corinthian women may echo the theatrical audience in their ordinariness and their lack of action, but they are especially privileged and partisan witnesses to Medea's story. As an internal audience that is not the general public, they facilitate tragedy's revelation of private thoughts and plans, especially those that belong to the inner world of women (Castellani (1989) 4). Through responses conditioned by their gender, the Chorus makes it harder for any spectator to dismiss Medea as inhuman. They show how her anger answers to forms of mistreatment that all women recognize, and how her action brings a cost to her that any mother would feel. At the same time, in their growing alienation from Medea's state of mind, they delineate the mysterious trajectory of revenge, which begins in an injury that easily inspires pity, but develops into a disproportionate zeal for harm that even the most supportive observer stands outside of.

While Euripides clearly found the configuration of struggling heroine and sympathetic Chorus especially congenial, his surviving plays also include two cases in which a Chorus of old men is similarly allied with a protagonist who is an old man. In the *Heracles*, a group of Theban elders stands up for Heracles' old father Amphitryon, who is being bullied by the tyrannical usurper Lycus in Heracles' absence. In the *Heracleidae* (or *Children of Heracles*), which is set after Heracles' death, old men of Marathon welcome Iolaus, Heracles' old friend and the guardian of his children, and provide him and his wards with a refuge from their pursuing enemies.

In some plays, a Chorus' loyalty to one protagonist puts it significantly at odds with others, as in the *Bacchae*, where the maenad Chorus is identified with Dionysus and shares his vengeful stance towards the human characters, which helps to stress their frailty and isolation. In the *Ion*, the Chorus consists of female servants of the Athenian queen Creusa, who has come to Delphi to consult the oracle about her childlessness. When they learn that Creusa's husband Xuthus plans to introduce Ion into the family as his son, they are so outraged on her behalf that they encourage her to kill Ion—one of the most active interventions by an Euripidean Chorus and one that fortunately fails, as Ion is really Creusa's own longlost child.

In yet another scenario, the Chorus of the *Andromache* tries to cope with rival female protagonists. In postTrojanwar Phthia, Achilles' son Neoptolemus is married to Hermione, daughter of Helen and Menelaus, but he also has as his concubine Andromache, the captured wife of Hector. The Chorus enters offering consolation to Andromache, "although I am Phthian" and despite their fear of Hermione, who is bitterly jealous of Andromache, but they also urge her to make friends with Hermione. Later, they sing an ode about the dangers of two people in charge in many spheres of life, including politics, music, and navigation (*Andr*. 465–93), and they try to get all of the shortsighted and contentious characters in the play to stop bickering.

3 Wider Contexts

The evenhandedness of the *Andromache*'s Chorus extends to their use of myth. Tragic choral odes often situate the action of a play in relation to a broader tradition, as the singers search for precedents or parallels to the events they witness and also, especially in Euripides, for their ultimate causes. So, after hearing Andromache and Hermione square off with mutual accusations, the Chorus looks back to the event that sparked the Trojan War, the judgment of Paris.

That was surely the start of great troubles, when Hermes

son of Maia and Zeus

came to the valley of Ida

leading a fine team

of three divine beauties

armed for a bitter contest over good looks …

(*Andr*. 274–79)

The search for origins leads straight to a parallel, another case of females vying for a man's approval. The competition of Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite is described in the same phrase, *eridi stugerâi*, "bitter contest," that the Chorus used earlier for the rivalry of Andromache and Hermione (*Andr*. 122) and they go on to make it sound like the wrangling that has just taken place: "they came before the son of Priam, competing with speeches full of malice" (*Andr*. 287–89). Female rivalry appears to be an inescapable pattern; beyond that, it is difficult to imagine a plausible alternative to this ancient course of events.

If only she had cast that evil thing out,

the mother who bore him,

before he settled

on the rocky slope of Ida.

(*Andr*. 293–95)

Even though they summon up Cassandra's dire prophecies at Paris' birth, the Chorus is clearly wishing for the impossible—something that not only did not happen but that could not have been expected to. And yet the consequences of Paris being allowed to live are universally bad. Measured in the hardships that Choruses can attest to, the war is equally a loss for both sides.

There would have been no yoke of slavery
for the women of Ilium,
you, lady, would have your place
in a royal house.
There would have been no woeful toiling
around Troy for the Greeks,
ten years of young men in armed exile.
No empty beds at home,
no old parents stranded
without children.

(*Andr*. 301–08)

Choruses in Euripides' several plays about the children of Agamemnon, including *Electra*, *Orestes*, and *Iphigenia in Tauris*, look back to the founding crimes of that family: Thyestes' seduction of his brother Atreus' wife and theft of the golden lamb that signified Atreus rightful kingship; Atreus' revenge by tricking Thyestes into feasting on his own children.

The house's woes go way back:
wrangling over the golden lamb
descended on the Tantalids
and the sorriest of meals,
noble children slaughtered.

(*Or*. 811–15)

Here the relevance of myth is evident, for it defines the murderous legacy from which the younger generation is trying to free itself. Overall, only a few of the odes sung by Euripidean Choruses can be charged with the irrelevance that Aristotle saw as a growing issue in tragedy. Earlier scholarship (following Kranz (1933), 235–41) labeled those odes "dithyrambic" because they manifest a degree of detachment and selfcontainment also seen in the dithyrambs of Bacchylides, but even in those cases sympathetic critics have been able to find points of contact with the circumstances of the play. A puzzling ode in the *Helen* about Demeter's mournful search for her daughter Persephone (*Hel*. 1301–68) has been brought into focus by recognition that Euripides has cast the story of Helen's sequestration in Egypt during the Trojan War as a version of Persephone's descent to the underworld (Foley (2001) 303–31). In the *Iphigenia in Tauris*, the birth and early deeds of Apollo (*IT* 1234–82) may not bear directly on the circumstances of Greek captives forced to serve a savage version of Artemis in a barbarian land, but this is a charter myth of normative Greek religion: the Chorus' song

expresses their attachment to that religious context and anticipates their reintegration into it.

Sometimes Choruses look to the more immediate past, summoning up the closer context of onstage events. The Chorus of *Medea* reverts several times to the moment when Medea sailed through the Symplegades, the "Clashing Rocks" separating her home on the Black Sea from the Greek Aegean—an irreversible step that prefigures her fateful choices in the course of the play (*Med*. 432–3, 1263–64). The *Hecuba*'s Chorus of captive Trojan women looks back to the last night of Troy, a moment that is both very recent and sharply different from their present circumstances; though they sing as a group, they voice the perspective of a single individual, such as each of them was before defeat and enslavement lumped them together.

I was undone in the dead of night,

that time when the feasting is over and sweet sleep covers

the eyes. Back from the singing, the dancing,

the sacrifices, my husband lay down in our room,

his spear hung up on its hook,

no longer on the lookout

for a shipload of men

trampling Troy.

I was fixing my hair,

tying it up in a cap,

gazing into the glimmering depths

of a golden mirror,

about to fall into bed.

(*Hec*. 914–927)

4 The Chorus as a Tragic Theme

However closely tied to the circumstances of the plot, the formal songs of Choruses are also markedly different in style from the actor's speeches: their language is more complex and allusive; their dialect is somewhat different; and their words are designed to go with music and dancing. Tragic Choruses always have a double identity as characters in the myth and as choral performers, and the texture of tragedy is defined by the contrast between ordinary dialogue and choral song and dance, a contrast which each tragedian exploits in different ways. Euripides is especially striking for the way he makes the Chorus itself an explicit theme in his plays. Sophoclean Choruses sometimes step out of character to allude to themselves as singers and dancers, but Euripides incorporates *choreia*, or "choral participation" into the fictional identities of both his characters and his Choruses (Henrichs (1994–95, 1996)). This is in

accord with the widespread role of *choreia* in Greek communal life: choral performances were a central feature of religious festivals and were associated with important rites of passage and moments of achievement, such as initiation ceremonies, weddings, and athletic victories (Bacon (1994–95)). The Chorus was a positive expression of human achievement, a display of wealth, skill, beauty, and harmony modeled on the dances of the Muses on Olympus. Its orderly movements mirrored the divine rotation of the stars and provided a model of the ideal city.

For the Athenians, tragedy was an especially spectacular and innovative form of choral performance that took its place alongside the dithyrambs, or songs in honor of Dionysus, that were part of the same annual festival. But festive singing and dancing have no place in the fictional world of tragedy; the only song appropriate to tragic circumstances is the joyless lament, often figured as a form of negated music (Segal (1993), 11–20). This contrast is registered by many Euripidean speakers, including Hecuba in the *Trojan Women* as she summons the Chorus to join her lament.

Like a mother bird with her young

I will lead a screechy song,

nothing like the song I led

in Priam's sceptered reign

with the proud beats of a Chorus leader's foot

in honor of Trojan gods.

(*Tro*. 146–52)

This is soon followed by another occasion of perverted song as Cassandra appears waving torches and singing a wedding song for herself. Inspired by her prophetic knowledge that Agamemnon will die when he takes her home as his war prize, she exults in the deadliness of their union and urges Hecuba and the Chorus to join her celebration. They grimly decline. Here, as in the victory song of the maenads in the *Bacchae* and in many other passages, the typical songs of happier occasions are echoed, but in ways that highlight the disturbing, aberrant conditions of a tragic scene (Swift (2010) 371–76).

The destruction of a city means the loss of its musical traditions; captive slaves grieve over their exile from a happier existence marked by regular festivity. The Chorus of the *Iphigenia in Tauris* are Greek women who have been cast into an alien existence: sold into slavery when their city was captured, they serve Iphigenia in her forced role as priestess of a barbarian cult on the coast of the Black Sea. When Orestes arrives and a plan is devised for Iphigenia's liberation, the Chorus sums up her good luck and their own misfortune in musical terms. They begin by addressing the halcyon, a bird associated with perpetual mourning.

I, a bird without wings,
vie with you in lamentation,
longing for the gathering places of the Greeks,
longing for Artemis, goddess of childbirth.
(*IT* 1094–97)

They envision Iphigenia's homecoming as a fantastic musical procession.

Lady, an Argive ship with fifty oars
will lead you home.
The whistling, waxbound
pipe of mountaindwelling Pan
will give the oars their beat.
Phoebus, the prophetic god,
will sing to the sound of his sevenstringed lyre
and lead you back safe to shining Athens.
(*IT* 1123–31)

And they end by joining a wish for escape (a common sentiment of Euripidean Choruses) with nostalgia for the true choral experience that their performance in the play necessarily distorts.

If only I could run along the shining track,
where the lightgiving sun goes back and forth!
But high above my room
I would be scrambling
without wings on my back.
If only I could join those Choruses, where once
a maiden in a famous house,
I whirled in the dance,
with my mother close by.
My friends and I
competed in gracefulness,
and the delicate prizes of wealth.
I wore a shawl of many colors
and let down my hair
to shade my cheek.

(*IT*. 1138–1152)

At the end of the play, Athena intervenes to assure that the Taurian king will send the Chorus back, so the rescue of Iphigenia is presumably matched by the Chorus' return to authentic *choreia*. Return to the dance is bound up with a promised happy ending for characters as well as Choruses. In the *Helen*, which has a similar plot to the *Iphigenia in Tauris*, Helen's escape from captivity in Egypt is envisioned by the Chorus as a return to her traditional role as a Chorus leader in Sparta (*Hel*. 1465–78; cf. Foley (2001) 320–22; Murnaghan (2013). In the *Electra*, Electra's refusal of the Chorus' invitation to a procession for Hera points up the hardship of her lot, relegated to a sham marriage with a poor farmer; at the end, she expresses her disorienting new status as a matricide by asking, "Where am I now? What Chorus/can I join? What marriage can I go to?" (*El*. 1198–99). But when divine intervention finally solves her problems, she is promised a fitting marriage to the noble Pylades and can be imagined rejoining the dance.

In these scenarios, regaining the joy of dancing lies outside the action of the play, when the complications of the plot have been resolved and the Chorus has been, in effect, released from its fictional role. While a tragic state of affairs is still in force, wholehearted dancing remains out of place. This is poignantly illustrated by the Chorus of old men in the *Heracles* (Henrichs (1996) 54–62). Oppressed by the tyrant Lycus, they enter with a shuffling gait that is emphatically not dancing: they lean on staves, they compare their steps to the footdragging of a yoked calf pulling a wagon uphill, and they hope to revive their former vigor only so they can

support one another when they fall. They compare their singing to the lament of a swan, who sings only when near death. But when Heracles comes back, they undergo a kind of rejuvenation that Greek culture associated with Dionysus and his blessings of wine and dancing.

Old singer that I am,

I still cry out to Mnemosyne,

still I sing a victory song

for Heracles,

with winegiving Dionysus,

with the song of the sevenstringed tortoise shell

and the Libyan flute.

Not yet will I stop honoring

the Muses, who set me dancing.

(*HF* 673–86)

It turns out that this version of a Chorus' recovery of its identity as vigorous performers marks a moment of false closure. Heracles' rescue of his friends is followed by a sudden reversal, as he goes mad and kills his family. In the second half of the play, the Chorus reenters the darker tragic universe, reverting to laments and to a bitter oxymoron: "a dance of Hades" (*HF* 1026–70).

Judging from Euripides' one surviving satyr play, the *Cyclops*, this pattern of losing and regaining the dance reflects the connection between tragedy and Dionysus. The only surviving tragedy with Dionysian themes is the *Bacchae*, but satyr plays always featured a group of mythical adherents of Dionysus, the hedonistic halfmanhalfanimal satyrs, as the Chorus. Typically for the genre, the *Cyclops* has a plot that parodies a wellknown myth, in this case the story of Odysseus and the Cyclops Polyphemus, and in which the Chorus has been enslaved. The Chorus of the *Cyclops* has been forced to work for Polyphemus; their dances have turned into mad dashes after wandering sheep, and they complain to Odysseus that they are stuck in "a land without Choruses" (*Cyc*. 124). But, thanks to Odysseus, they escape at the play's end and return to Dionysus and their life of endless revelry (Murnaghan (2011) 253–54). (For further discussion of Euripides' *Cyclops*, see O'Sullivan's essay in this volume.)

5 Musical History

Euripides' habit of layering one musical occasion on another, as an onstage performance echoes an imaginary performance somewhere else, is matched by the way those imaginary performances combine diverse musical forms: both Pan's pipes and Apollo's lyre accompany Iphigenia's return to Greece; the victory song of the *Heracles*' Chorus is sounded by the

tortoiseshell lyre and the flute (the instrument actually played in tragic performances). This dense musical imagery can be connected to wider developments in Athenian musical culture in the last decades of the fifth century and early decades of the fourth (especially the period from 430–380 BCE), the emergence of what scholars have labeled "new music," a more passionate, variegated, and virtuosic style of performance that was identified with the theater and its broad popular audience (Csapo (1999–2000); see also D'Angour and Roselli in this volume). We know this phenomenon largely through the comments of conservative critics like Plato who saw it as decadent and vulgar, along with fragmentary poems by nondramatic practitioners, and the many marks it left in our surviving tragic texts.

In the plays of Sophocles and Euripides, the presence of the new music is evident in extensive passages of lyric sung not by Choruses but by individual actors; the movement coincided with the rise of skilled professional actors for the individual roles. Both authors made increasing use of actors singing in dialogue with the Chorus, as Hecuba does in the *Trojan Women*, and Euripides also introduced lyric dialogues between two actors at emotional high points: for example, the reunion of mother and son in the *Ion* or of husband and wife in the *Helen*. The heightened emotionalism of the actors had repercussions for the Chorus, which was not eclipsed by the actors' increased intensity (to return to Aristotle's misleading claim) but altered and energized. Engagement with new music is yet another explanation for Euripides' preference for female Choruses, especially since all of his plays dated from the 420 s and after have female Choruses (Csapo (1999–2000) 424). Emotional abandonment was understood as a female trait, naturally expressed in the higher registers of the female voice— or, as in tragedy, the male voice imitating the female voice—which mandated female protagonists in close rapport with female Choruses.

Highlighting music's power in the context of these glamorous new developments, Euripides also stresses music's origins with the aim, some scholars suggest, of showing that the new music is really nothing new (Csapo (1999–2000), Steiner (2011)). He stages the genesis of antiphonal lament in the convergence of grieving protagonist and consoling Chorus, as at the opening of the *Trojan Women*, or at the beginning of the *Helen*: there Helen, griefstruck and isolated, calls for a group of mythical singers—the Sirens—to appear with "tears to match my tears/woes to match my woes/songs to match my songs" (*Hel*. 174–76); a group of women doing laundry hears what sounds like the cry of a nymph pursued by Pan and comes to her side; together they become a Chorus and its leader (Ford (2010)). When Helen is on her way back to Greece, leaving the Chorus behind, they sing an ode in which their role is translated back into the elemental *choreia* of the natural world (Steiner (2011)). The ship that carries Helen home is "leader of the dolphins with their graceful Choruses"; the Chorus would like to fly like cranes who "flying in formation follow the piping of their oldest, their shepherd" to proclaim the news of Helen's return to Sparta; they call for the help of Helen's divine brothers who travel through the heavens "above the whirlings of the radiant stars" (*Hel*. 1450–1511).

For humans, the natural vitality of dancing is the gift of Dionysus, and so it makes sense that Euripides' interest in musical origins should find expression in the *Bacchae*, one of his very latest plays. In portraying the cult of Dionysus, Euripides is in part dramatizing the roots of tragedy, although he may not have had any more precise knowledge than we do of exactly how

Dionysian worship contributed to the development of the genre. The Chorus of exotically dressed, highpitched, vigorously moving maenads offers an exciting spectacle showcasing the most advanced features of tragic style. Their notable aloofness from the human characters whose interactions with Dionysus end in grief represents a striking and chilling variation on the Chorus' more usual role in the myth. But their presence as singers and dancers also works to counterbalance the fictional plot; like all tragic Choruses, they are reminders that, however horrific the action of a play, tragedy is a festive form with ties to the natural order, to the worship of the gods, and to the institutions of the city.

The divine one, the son of Zeus,

rejoices in festivals.

He loves the goddess Peace,

giver of prosperity,

protector of the young.

To rich and poor alike

he grants

the harmless joy of wine.

(*Bacch*. 416–23)

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FURTHER READING

The best and most uptodate overview of Euripides' use of the Chorus (with extensive bibliography) is chapter 4 of Mastronarde (2010). Mastronarde gives particular attention to the

relationship between the Chorus and the audience, to the sources and extent of choral authority, and to the relevance of choral odes. The tendency of Euripides' Choruses to highlight the theme of choral performance is discussed by Henrichs (1994–1995). For Euripides' relationship to the "new music," a good starting point is Csapo (1999–2000).

On the tragic Chorus more generally, an introduction to the formal conventions of tragic lyric can be found in Battezzato (2005a). Swift (2010) discusses the reuse in tragedy of motifs from nondramatic lyric. Foley (2003) provides an overview of the fictional roles of Choruses in Greek tragedy, with insightful analysis and attention to the distinctive practices of individual playwrights. The social marginality of choral identities is explored, especially in relation to the Chorus' authority to voice shared communal values, in the exchange between Gould (1996) and Goldhill (1996). For the tragic Chorus in relation to the Chorus in general as a feature of ancient Greek culture, a good starting point is Bacon (1994–1995); for the tragic Chorus in relation to Athenian ideas about civic participation, Calame (1999).

CHAPTER 28
Euripides and the Sound of Music

Armand D'Angour

1 The Music of Attic Drama

Performances of classical tragedies were musical events more akin to a modern opera or musical than to a theater play. Our notion of "music" nowadays tends to privilege melodies and harmonies (whether on voice or instruments), but rhythm is just as integral to music, and arguably even more central. The inherent metricality of the ancient Greek language, whose words fall into patterns of long and short syllables, gives rhythm a special claim to importance when considering ancient music (D'Angour (2009)). The varied and multiple verseforms of Greek poetry imparted to Attic drama, with its combination of spoken, sung, and danced components, a constant and variegated quality of rhythm and movement. The regular and complex metrical patterns that gave rise to the rhythms of performance, which are inscribed in the words of the dramas rather than being separately indicated in a musical score, may be subjected to precise and detailed analysis (see West (1982)). The determination of some elements of rhythmical realisation, however, such as tempo, beat, pulse, and dynamics, must remain a matter of conjecture.

The melodic realization of dramatic texts (the aspect of music that this chapter will largely consider) is not susceptible to an equivalent degree of assurance as their metrical interpretation. Greek music knew nothing of the harmonic structures used in the developed tradition of Western classical music. Surviving evidence appears to indicate the use of simultaneous combinations of different pitches (heterophony) for instrument and voice, and this might have been more common than generally supposed. Two parallel systems of melodic notation, one instrumental and one vocal, were devised in antiquity (probably in the fifth century BCE), consisting of alphabetic or quasialphabetic signs placed above or between words. A few dozen passages of musically notated texts, some consisting of little more than a few notes, survive on stone and marble inscriptions, as well as on a number of fragmentary papyri, and with the help of detailed technical information provided by later ancient sources (notably the treatise of the fifthcentury AD author Alypius), scholars have interpreted the symbols and presented their melodic signification in modern staff notation. Transcribed as in Pöhlmann and West (2001), the fragments allow us, in conjunction with detailed philosophical and theoretical discussions, remarks in ancient comedy, and incidental comments by ancient authors, to form a reasonable understanding of the melodic principles of ancient Greek music, and to pursue clues about its auditory nature and effects in practice.

The musical content of Attic tragedies, both rhythmic and melodic, was mainly represented in the activity of the Chorus (*khoros*), whose members (*khoreutai*) realized the words of choral passages in their singing, dancing, and sundry handgestures and bodily movements

(*kheironomia*). (For more on the Chorus, see Murnaghan in this volume.) By Euripides' time the tragic Chorus consisted of fifteen members, of which one was normally designated as the Chorusleader (*koruphaios*). The choreuts, who wore costumes and masks, entered the dancingfloor (*orkhēstra*) at or near the start of the drama, singing or chanting an entrance song (*parodos*) composed in a meter with a strong regular rhythm suitable for marching to, such as anapaests (*di di DUM, di di DUM*) or ionics (*di di DUM DUM, di di DUM DUM*). They usually remained present throughout the performance, and at intervals in the course of the drama performed passages of socalled "lyric" song; these might more accurately called "melic" (from *melos*, song) since the lyre was not standardly used to accompany the singing of tragic Choruses. The rhythms of lyric song conformed to formal metrical patterns, often of a very complex and intricate nature, which were distinct from those used in dramatic speeches and which, along with certain linguistic peculiarities (such as the use of Doric *ā* in place of AtticIonic *ē*), help us identify them as composed for singing; the manuscripts do not otherwise indicate this distinction.

In contrast to lyric passages, narrative discourse (*rhēsis*) put into the mouths of characters and linebyline exchange of speech (*stikhomūthia*) between dramatic interlocutors were standardly composed in iambic trimeters. These were declaimed rather than sung or chanted; Aristotle describes iambics as *malista lektikon*, "most suitable for speech" and therefore used by tragedians for the purpose (*Poetics* 1449a21–8, *Rhetoric* 1404a31–5). Even these spoken passages, however, are likely to have been melodically heightened in performance, since in ordinary spoken Greek of classical times, words were enunciated with quasimelodic rises and falls in pitch, nowadays indicated by the printed accents of Greek texts (a late ancient author, the grammarian Diomedes, advised that iambic passages in drama should be read "with melody," *meta melous*, perhaps because in his time the pitch accent was giving way to stress).

Pitch accents could have been exploited by composers and performers of drama by allowing, for instance, melodic aspects of speech to provide an effective transition into song (in Euripides' *Phoenician Women* 145–6, for instance, an iambic trimeter merges into a line of lyric verse). The fact that pitchtones were clearly enunciated in performance is indicated by the story of the star actor Hegelochos who, in performing the part of protagonist in Euripides' *Orestes* of 408 BCE, misspoke *galén*' in the line (279) "After the stormwaves, once again I see calm [*aûthis aû galén' horô*]" as *galên*, thus declaring "After the stormwaves, once again I see a weasel [*galên horô*]"; the error was mocked mercilessly by contemporary comic poets. Hegelochos is likely to have dropped his voice after raising it on the last syllable of *galén*', uttering *galên* in sympathy with the rise and fall on the final syllables of *aûthis*, *aû*, and *horô*; such a slip would not have been as easily made or perceived had he been required to sing each syllable to a predetermined note of given pitch.

In addition to the choreuts, individual dramatic characters might occasionally exchange sung verses with the Chorus or even burst into solo song; and in two passages of Euripides (*Hippolytus* 61–71, *Orestes* 1302–10) the actor may have sung in concert with the Chorus. Euripides' *Hippolytus* of 428 BCE is the first extant tragedy to feature a solo lyric arias or monodies (*monōidiai*), the first sung by Phaedra (lines 669–79) and the second by Hippolytus (1347–88). In some passages of earlier tragedies such as Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, where

Cassandra and the Chorus of Theban elders interchange lyric verses, the Chorus sings in dialogue with a character. Aristotle singled out *kommoi*, quasiritual songs of lamentation involving an exchange between voices, as models of such interchange (the more general term *amoibaion*, "exchange," allows for the fact that some lyric dialogues of this kind express positive emotions). It is sometimes supposed that in such exchanges the *koruphaios* alone would respond to the actor rather than the Chorus as a whole; but there is no incontrovertible evidence for this view, and unison speaking by the Chorus is equally possible.

Aristotle also suggests that there was a steady diminution of the dramatic role of the Chorus from the time of Aeschylus to that of Euripides, so that it eventually came to perform independent musical interludes (*embolima*) which had no relevance to the action of the drama. But the proportion of text given to Choruses appears to remain fairly constant (at around one fifth) throughout surviving texts of tragedy, and Euripidean Choruses are not noticeably less integrated into the action than those of Aeschylus and Sophocles. What may have influenced Aristotle's view was the increased attention paid to the musical realization and performance techniques of Euripidean Choruses, seemingly at the expense of their dramatic function; furthermore, Euripides' setting of actors' words to music is significantly higher in his later plays (Csapo (2000)).

The Chorus was standardly accompanied by an aulete, a professional instrumentalist who performed on the aulos, two doublereed pipes played in combination. The aulos (the singular form is more often found than the plural auloi, despite it being played as a pair) was considered to be the instrument of Dionysus, god of tragedy. While one or other pipe could have been used as a drone, vasepaintings regularly show the fingers of both hands stopping the boreholes of two pipes of equal length. This suggests that performers of the aulos played two melodic lines simultaneously: an important treatise on music refers to the "conversations" (*dialektoi*) between auloi (PseudoPlutarch *On Music* 1144c), and ethnomusicological parallels (e.g. with performers of the Sardinian triplepipe *launeddas*) clearly corroborate this assumption.

The aulete entered the *orkhēstra* together with the Chorus and took up a position at a central spot close to where the choreuts sang and danced. In the theater of Dionysus at Athens in the late fifth century, this position would have been near or on the steps of the god's altar, from which the instruments' penetrating sound (Aristophanes compares it to the buzzing of a wasp, and reconstructed auloi produce a range of delicate, harsh, and sinuous tones) both guided the choreuts' movements and could be heard through the voices. There are indications in the texts of some Euripidean tragedies (below I give examples from Euripides' *Antiope* and *Bacchae*) that stringed instruments such as the lyre and kithara, as well as percussion such as drums and tambourines, were occasionally used in performance. If so, these instruments were associated with specific dramatic contexts, and their presence would appear to have been an exception to the usual instrumentation of tragic performance. One example of a dramatic scenario in which the use of a lyre is indicated is Euripides' *Antiope*, in which a debate is held between the twins Amphion and Zethus regarding the status of music versus soldiery (Wilson (1999)). The musical Amphion is urged by his brother to cast aside his "useless" lyre and live the life of a soldier; the opposition is eventually only reconciled by divine fiat, whereupon Amphion's

lyremusic is used to build the walls of Thebes.

2 Music in Euripides' Tragedies

In Euripides' *Mad Heracles* the Chorus of elders sing (673–684):

I shall not cease mingling
the Graces and the Muses,
a union most sweet.
May I never live a Museless life!
Ever may I go garlanded!
Old singer that I am I still
sing the praise of Mnemosyne,
still hymn Heracles'
glorious victory
in company with Bacchus giver of wine,
in company with the song
of the sevenstringed tortoise shell and the Libyan pipe.

(tr. Kovacs)

These evocative verses have sometimes been thought to represent the views of the poet himself, though many scholars reject such a romanticized interpretation (Parry (1965)). But the thematic and practical importance of music to Euripides is evident from the texts of all his extant tragedies, which make frequent mention of music or singing in connection to emotions of sadness or joy using terms such as *ōdē* (song), *melos* (melody), and *harmonia* (attunement), and making reference to the Muses as goddesses and inspirers of music and dance. In some passages, specific types of song (hymn, paean, dirge) and musical instruments (lyre, kithara, aulos, syrinx) are specified. It is notable that the lyre, the symbolic antitype of the aulos, more regularly appears in the form of a negative adjective ("lyreless," e.g. *aluros, akitharis*) to indicate a situation of mourning or tragic sorrow.

The allusions to music and to musical instruments lend a number of the choral passages in which they occur a selfreferential quality, sometimes with unmistakeable implications for the song's performance. In the *Bacchae* in particular, the Chorus of bacchants draws attention to the drum on which they are beating with a riddling allusion to the "hidestretched circle" (*bursotonon kuklōma*), as well as to the pipes employed as musical accompaniment to Dionysiac rite and to the Phrygian *harmonia* (attunement) commonly used in the music of dithyrambs (choral songs originally associated with the ritual worship of Dionysus):

> Oh lair of the Kouretes and sacred Zeusbegetting haunts of Crete, where the triple helmeted Korybantes in the cave invented for me this hidestretched circle, and in the intense bacchic dance they mixed it with the sweetshouting beat of Phrygian pipes . . .
>
> (*Bacchae* lines 120–28 tr. Seaford; cf. lines 156–8)

Near the beginning of *Orestes*, just before Electra conducts a lyric exchange with the Chorus near the bed of the sleeping Orestes, she requests (136–7):

Dearest friends, with quiet steps

go forth, make no noise, let there be no sound.

There follows a dialogue in dochmiac meter, which is often used to represent agitation or high emotion:

> Softly softly, your footsteps lightly place, make no sound.
>
> Go back from the bed, please go back.
>
> CHORUS:
>
> See, I'm doing as you ask.
>
> ELECTRA:
>
> Ah, ah. Like the breath of a slender reed, my friend, speak to me.
>
> CHORUS:
>
> See how I bring a gentle indoors voice.

An ancient commentator on the second strophe of the *Orestes* passage (scholiast on line 176) writes:

> This song is sung on the socalled *nētai* (top notes) and is very highpitched. It is implausible for Electra to use a high voice, especially when she is reprimanding the Chorus. But she has to use the high register because it is characteristic of people lamenting. The song is as light as possible.

A similar indication of a vocal pianissimo occurs when Amphitryon in *Mad Heracles* (1042 f.) urges the Chorus not to disturb the sleeping hero. In both contexts, the implicit instruction to actor and Chorus is that they should employ some vocal means of making the song "as light as possible."

In the *Trojan Women* of 415 BCE, the Chorus calls on the Muse to sing of Troy's fall (lines 511–15):

Regarding Ilion, O

Muse, sing a song of novel strains [*kainōn humnōn*)],

a mourningsong

accompanied by tears;

for now I shall utter a song [*melos*] for Troy . . .

The novelty referred to here is of both form and content. The Chorus are retelling the story of the fall of Troy from the perspective of the defeated women, with *humnoi* couched in lyric rather than epic rhythms (Sansone (2009)). The reference to *melos* suggests that the melic component was also an issue; and if so, it is likely to be related to Euripides' involvement in the "New Musical" experiments of the period, to which we may now turn.

3 Euripides and the New Music

The later decades of the fifth century saw marked changes in musical sounds, practices, and contexts of performance. Contemporary observers, as well as later conservative critics such as Plato, characterized the changes as a musical revolution. The theatrical genres of dithyramb and tragedy were the focus of the stylistic changes that comprised what has been called in modern times the "New Music," and Euripides was numbered, along with his fellow tragedian Agathon and the notorious musician Timotheus of Miletus, among its foremost advocates and practitioners (see also Roselli in this volume).

A passage from the comedy *Chiron* by the late fifthcentury comic poet Pherecrates (fragment 155) names a succession of "Museviolators," culminating with Timotheus. Although the changes of musical style related no less to stringed instruments (particularly the kithara, the larger concerthall form of the lyre) than to the aulos, the latter with its polyphonic range, versatility, and relationship to Dionysiac ecstasy was particularly associated by critics with the way traditional music had been "cast loose" from traditional decorum. Timotheus was famous for *kitharoidia* (singing to the kithara, see Power (2010)), and his defiant modernism and pursuit of novelty are indicated by the words of one of his own compositions:

I don't sing the old songs,

My new songs are better.

Of old Kronos was ruler,

But now Zeus is king.

Get lost, ancient Muse!

(*Poetae Melici Graeci* 796)

An anecdote in Satyrus' *Life of Euripides* attests to a professional association of Euripides with Timotheus:

> When Timotheus was [being scorned] by the Greeks for his musical innovation and was so deeply dispirited that he had decided to kill himself, Euripides alone ridiculed the audiences in turn, and perceiving how great a composer Timotheus was in his sphere of art, he encouraged him with the most reassuring words and even collaborated with him in composing the prelude to *The Persians*, with the result that Timotheus took the prize and ceased to be rejected.

The account may be biographically unreliable—Euripides' relationship with Timotheus may even have been one of rivalry rather than cooperation—but the story indicates the way that the two avantgarde practitioners were linked in popular imagination. The penchant for novelty so strikingly demonstrated by Euripides in his style, meters, and plots extended to the music he composed for his tragedies. This is confirmed by the evidence of Aristophanes, who throughout his comedies engages in ceaseless poetic rivalry with Euripides, parodying, imitating, and citing his scenarios, plots, and expressions (the comic poet Cratinus coined the verb *euripidaristophanizein*, "to Euripid–Aristophanize," to characterize the verbal virtuosity evident in both poets). While the fourthcentury comic dramatist Antiphanes claimed that the comic poet's task was harder than that of tragedians because he was required to invent new names, plots and so on (rather than simply to adapt existing myths with familiar characters), Euripides was so innovative that he could be explicitly presented in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae* as competing with comedians on their own terms.

Aristophanes' comic parody of Euripides extended to the imitation and critique of the tragedian's perceived musical excesses. In *Frogs* of 405 BC, Aristophanes puts "Euripides" on stage as a character in the Underworld (he had recently died in Macedon) competing with "Aeschylus" for the prize of tragedy, judged by the god Dionysus presented in comic garb and style. In a passage in which "Aeschylus" contrasts his own decorous musical practices with those of "Euripides," the main criticism he levels at his rival is that he is indiscriminate in the way he mixes high and low genres of song:

This fellow takes his material from all over: whore songs,

drinking songs by Meletus, Carian pipe tunes,

dirges, and dances. I'll demonstrate it soon enough—

someone bring my lyre! Mind you, who needs

a lyre for this? Where's that woman with the potsherds,

the one who plays on them? Oh Muse of Euripides, come out here;

you're the right person to sing these songs.

(Aristophanes *Frogs* 1301–7)

The implication of Aeschylus' dismissal of his lyre in favour of the "woman with the potsherds" is that Euripides' music is tuneless: it is not worth playing on a musical instrument, and may as well be performed on bits of pottery. In the next verse Dionysus sarcastically

interjects “This Muse never did the Lesbian thing [*elesbiazen*], now, did she?” (1308). This makes a sexual allusion to the act of fellatio (“Lesbian” in this period did not allude to female homosexuality), and also draws attention to the “Lesbian” (i.e. Aeolic) meter frequently used by Euripides in his lyric passages, in which the first parody of a Euripidean choral ode (1309–22) is largely couched (De Simone 2008). The second parody by “Aeschylus” (1331–1363) takes aim at Euripidean monody. An aria composed in no regular metrical pattern, which is reminiscent in its effect, if not in its words, of the monody sung by the Phrygian slave in Euripides’ *Orestes* (1368–1502), is put into the mouth of a lowclass spinningwoman, who extravagantly dramatizes a banal scenario—her awakening from a nightmare to discover that her neighbor had stolen her pet cockerel.

While both lyric parodies put into the mouth of “Aeschylus” aim to amuse the audience with their barely coherent narratives and nonsensicality, what can they tell us about how Euripidean lyrics were heard? We can only speculate about how they were sung in practice, but the texts exhibit some of the more notorious features of what was thought to characterize Euripides’ music. The most striking element is the treatment of the idea that the conventional length of a syllable should not be grossly violated by its musical setting for the sake of expressive effect. The text of both parodic passages spells out the first syllable of *heilissete* (“twirl” or “wind,” a word much favoured by Euripides, occurring over forty times in his extant tragedies) with as many as seven repetitions—*heieieieieieieilissete* . This is taken to indicate that several melodic notes were sung within the space of a syllable, employing a musical embellishment called a *melisma*. Euripides was evidently heard to have exceeded the conventional setting of words by requiring that the syllable’s enunciation be extended by melodic figuration well beyond its “natural” timeduration (a sevenfold repetition of the diphthong *hei* could hardly avoid a lengthening of the syllable well beyond its normal syllabic quantity). The lively melisma on the extended first syllable programmatically imitates the “winding” connoted by the word, but in doing so it distorts the metrical structure standardly created by the orderly enunciation of syllabic quantities, instantiating the “lawbreaking” (*paranomia*) that conservative critics levelled at the New Musical style.

A second musical feature to which the parody draws attention is the astrophic pattern of its meter. Rather than creating a regular metrical pattern of words that could be repeated in successive verses or stanzas, the words seem to flow without conforming to any structure. Astrophic songs were a notable aspect of the style of the New Musicians, who exercised “freedom” from traditional metrical restraints in order to make their songs more mimetic and dramatic. The comic poets derided this style of composition, using descriptive terms such as “wrigglings” and “antruns”; Philoxenus, a composer of dithyrambs particularly identified with the New Music, was nicknamed “the Ant.”

A third important element of the parody would have been that of its melodic shape or structure. Unfortunately we cannot extract this from the surviving text as accurately as the way we can derive indications of rhythm and meter. However, a late source (pseudoPsellus *On Tragedy* 5.39) provides the following account of how Euripidean melody diverged technically from that of earlier tragedians:

> The music of early tragedy uses the unmixed enharmonic genus and a genus created by mixing the enharmonic and diatonic genera, but none of the tragedians until Euripides appears to have made use of the chromatic genus. The character of this genus is soft. Of the modes (*tonoi*), ancient tragedy mainly uses the Dorian and Mixolydian, the former because it is suited to solemnity, the latter because it is associated with mourning; it also used the socalled free (or loose) modes (*harmoniai*), the Ionian and the free Lydian.[…] Euripides first used a large range of notes: this style of music was called "gapped" by ancient musicians. And generally speaking, Euripides uses many more genera and exhibits much more variety than his predecessors.

The "modes" (*harmoniai* or *tonoi*) were, in simple terms, systems of tuning analogous to modern musical scales (e.g. the C major or D minor scales); but as this passage indicates, different modes such as Dorian and Ionian were felt to have distinct ethical effects. The so called "genera" modified the effects of these attunements by altering the pattern of intervals within the scales (rather as a melodic minor scale differs from a harmonic minor). Three genera were distinguished, enharmonic, chromatic, and diatonic. The enharmonic, which was thought of as the earliest and most "original" genus, made use of fine pitchdifferences (i.e. quartertones). Towards the end of the fifth century, music composed in this melodic style was considered increasingly oldfashioned, and was giving way to melodies created with less subtle halftones (the chromatic genus) and whole tones (the diatonic genus). The diatonic genus was felt to impart a "sweeter" sound that was heard as more gratifying to vulgar tastes. Such sounds may have come more easily to the ears and lips of professional performers seeking to please their audiences, and increasingly to nonelite choreuts who were less steeped in the sound of the older style of music. Euripides was not only associated with the introduction of the chromatic genus, as the above account suggests, but with a mixing of different genera within the same melodic passage; and the point about his "gapped" style suggests that he tended to compose with wider intervals between successive notes of a melody than was traditional.

A further melodic feature to which Aristophanes' parodies draw attention is the practice of "modulation" (*metabolē*) between different *harmoniai*. This was considered to be a notable feature of the New Music even if, technically speaking, modulation between modes was nothing new. Many types of traditional song will have persisted in a single mode and would have had no use for modulation, but the evidence suggests that it was a practice familiar to musicians for generations (D'Angour 2006). However, the manner in which modulation was employed by instrumentalists and tragedians of the later fifth century such as Timotheus and Euripides appears to have been, or been felt as, considerably more unrestrained than hitherto. It is therefore likely that the melodic realization of the Aristophanic parodies included sudden shifts in musical modes and registers, and jumps between sung notes, that would have sounded no less evident than the wild lurches and chaotic jumps of sense and syntax demonstrated by the words of the text. These melodic features may have been more excessive than anything Euripides himself had composed, but to the audience the effect is bound to have been instantly, and hilariously, recognizable (one may perhaps compare the effect of Dudley Moore's singing and playing of "Little Miss Muppet" in brilliant parody of Benjamin Britten's musical style).

The melodic qualities of Euripidean Choruses made them uniquely memorable and exciting; Plutarch movingly tells (*Nicias* 29) how a few Athenians who returned to Athens after having been taken captive after the failed Sicilian expedition of 415–413 BCE went to pay their respects to Euripides, because "some had been released from slavery by teaching what they could remember of his songs, and others, when straggling after the fight, had been relieved with food and drink for repeating some of his lyrics."

4 The *Orestes* Musical Papyrus

Aristophanes' parodies of and comic criticisms of Euripides' musical style throw valuable light on the one arguably direct piece of evidence for Euripidean melodic practice that we are fortunate to possess. A musical papyrus known since 1890 (Pap. Vienna G 2315) preserves seven lines of a choral song accompanied by vocal and instrumental symbols. The text is from the antistrophe of the first stasimon (with the first two lines transposed) of Euripides' *Orestes* (lines 338–344), in which is invoked the avenging spirit:

who drives you to frenzy at your mother's murder.

I am weeping, I am weeping.

Great good fortune is not lasting among mortals;

shaking it like the sail of a swift ship,

some god overwhelms it in waves of fearful

troubles, as in the ocean's boisterous

deadly waves.

Dating from the late third century BCE, the papyrus seems likely to preserve the melody created by Euripides himself. The dochmiac rhythm of the lyrics is accompanied by notation that can be identified as belonging to the Lydian scale, and the genus may be enharmonic or chromatic (or mixed); in view of the testimony of pseudoPsellus above, one might suppose that such a late Euripidean melody would exploit the chromatic genus, though Pöhlmann and West (2001) are inclined to prefer the enharmonic on the grounds that this was generally more prevalent in fifthcentury tragedy. The instrumental notes may be interpreted as indications of aulos accompaniment. They are pitched at various intervals above (and in one case below) the corresponding sung notes, including those of a musical fourth, sixth, or octave. The notation may simply have been used to indicate the incidence of a concurrent aulos accompaniment at these points in the song; but in two cases, the instrumental notation suggests that the aulos played a fourth (diphonically) to accompany the vocal line. In the penultimate line, *hōs* sung with a melisma is written out with a double vowel (*hōōs*). This may have been the case for other naturally long vowels and dipththongs that were sung to more than one note (the reconstruction suggests e.g. *daimōōn*, *ponōōn hōōs pontouou*), but we cannot be certain; in the last line two separate notes are indicated above the (naturally short) *e* of *en*, while the vowel

itself is only written once.

There are several features to be observed in the melodic line. First, the layout of the notation shows to have been designed to accompany the strophe as well, from which it was evidently copied. This would suggest that it was designed with the strophe rather than the antistrophe in mind. This supposition is lent weight by the way the three strikingly repeated high notes to which the final syllables of (*ana*)*bakkheuei* are set; with three long syllables one might have expected melodic variation, but the syllables here correspond to the word *haimatos* (a more compact syllabic pattern of longshortlong) in the strophe (322). Secondly, the range of the notes used falls within the interval of a seventh and clusters around two tonal centres a fifth apart (*a* and *e* in modern notation). The notes generally proceed in fairly close stepwise movement, in intervals ranging from a microtone through to a minor third. An upward leap of a fourth (accompanied by an aulos note) at *a*(*na de laiphos*) occurs on a syllable that begins a new phrase in the text; this is also the case for the strophe, where the leap would occur after the repeated *kathiketeuomai* "I entreat you" (324, followed by the entreaty itself, "let the son of Agamemnon be relieved of his madness"). There appears to be an even larger leap (of around a fifth) accompanying *en* in the last line, corresponding to the second syllable of *orekhtheis* in the strophe; but the melody immediately returns with *ku*(*masin*) to a note that falls within the earlier tonal ambit. It would make better sense for the sudden rise and fall of the melody to have been intended to add programmatic colour to the word *orekhtheis* ("having extended") in the strophe, rather than the responding *en*.

One must be cautious about importing modern Western musical assumptions regarding melodic shape and effect into Greek music, but it is noticeable that there is a falling melodic cadence of the last three syllables of *katolophuromai* ("I lament"), repeated at *en brotois* ("among mortals"), and correspondingly in the strophe on the syllables of the words *(tinumen)ai phonou* ("(repay)ing the murder") and *(kathike)teuomai* ("I beseech"). The mournful effect of this iterated falling musical phrase suits the dejected sentiments of the text it accompanies. Similarly, the note accompanying (*ana*)*bakkheuei* is around a fifth higher than the previous note visible in the text; while it is possible that the lacuna was filled by notes creating a gradual rise in pitch, it is equally possible that (*ana*)*bakkheuei*, literally meaning "makes (your heart) leap like a Bacchant," was placed in a melodic setting that programmatically imitated that very "leap." The musical setting, which accompanies both strophe and antistrophe, shows no consistent conformity to Greek word accents throughout, and was evidently composed without paying attention to them. All this raises considerations about the basis of Euripidean melodization that I shall now proceed to explore.

5 The Sound of Music

A muchdebated question in Greek musical scholarship has been the question of how and to what extent the melodic shape was dictated or influenced by the pitch accents intrinsic to the pronunciation of Greek words. Greek music found on papyri and inscriptions dating from the third century BCE on exhibits a high degree of correspondence between melody and pitch accent, and evidence from other pitched languages show that correspondence of this kind is not

uncommon (Devine and Stephens (1994)). This would be a reasonable expectation, since a word pronounced with a marked rise of pitch on one syllable might well sound incongruous if the highest melodic pitch fell on another. In responding stanzas, however, there are likely to be different and often conflicting pitch accents, so the obvious solution when composing the melody would be to ignore accents altogether, regardless of the resulting incongruities, as seems to be the case with the melodization of the *Orestes* papyrus.

The secondcentury literary critic Dionysius of Halicarnassus cites the lines of the choral passage with quiet singing from Euripides' *Orestes* discussed above, together with the corresponding lines of the antistrophe, precisely to demonstrate the point that melody does not follow pitchaccents. He writes:

> In these lines *síga síga leukòn* is all sung on one note, even though all three words contain both grave and acute accents. And *arbúlēs* has the third syllable on the same note as the second, despite it being impossible for one word to have two acutes. In *títhete* the first syllable is made lower in pitch, while the two after it are high and on the same pitch level. Again, in *ktupeît'* the circumflex has disappeared as the two syllables are both enunciated with one pitch. *Apopróbate* does not receive the acute of its middle syllable, but the accent of the third syllable has been transferred to the fourth.

As we have seen, Euripides was strongly associated with the innovations of the New Music. This gives rise to the question whether the *Orestes* papyrus may in fact only provide evidence for specifically Euripidean practice rather than the more general practice of melodization. It has been plausibly argued that the melodic basis of Homeric singing, the earliest kind we can identify, was related to the pitch accents of spoken language (West (1981)), and it is often assumed that poets diverged from this principle for various reasons. First, the application of pitch accents has no relevance to purely instrumental music, and it may be that purely instrumental melodies were used for, or at least influenced the composition of, sung music. Secondly, it is assumed that strophic responsion, such as that found in archaic lyric, must have required the repetition of the same melodies from verse to verse, with the result that these would bear little or no relation to the variable pitchaccents of words. Euripides' music was, however, considered a striking exception to the norm, and unfortunately we have no equivalent documentary evidence or similar detailed descriptions of the melodies of Aeschylus or Sophocles, Sappho or Pindar. We should not assume on the basis of Euripidean evidence alone that the melodies used by these other poets for strophic stanzas and responsional lyrics paid no attention to pitch accents. Could they perhaps have done so, and if so, how?

A less restrictive view than is normally held of how melodization operated may help to make the case that Euripides' practice in this respect was a departure from the norm. I have elsewhere argued (D'Angour (2006)) that the conventions for composing sung music were by and large principles for applying melody to the inherent pitch accents of words. This is indicated by remarks in Aristophanes and Plato about the teaching of music, once a major part of a tradition of elite education that was in decline at the end of the fifth century. In Plato's *Protagoras* (362ab) the early education of an upperclass boy is outlined thus:

> When they have taught him the use of the lyre they introduce him to the poems of other excellent poets, the lyric poets, setting them to the lyre, and they make their rhythms and *harmoniai* quite familiar to the children's soul.

The fact the poems are "set to" the lyre, and the emphasis on rhythm and *harmoniai* rather then *melos*, seems to support the view that the music did not necessarily involve a given, familiar melody. Instruction was concerned with the "correct" or "fitting" use of modes or *harmoniai*, which were thought to impart a very particular *ēthos* or character to music, rather than with simply committing traditional melodies accurately to memory (though no doubt this was also done in some cases). These principles of melodization, and the melodies to which they gave rise, would have been passed on by oral tradition and instruction rather than by the use of notation. Faithful oral transmission of the melic component would have been made feasible by the fact that it respected pitch accents, in similar fashion to the way meters mapped out the inherent quantities of syllables.

Given an overall shape of melody related to wordpitches, then, poets and composers working in different traditions and genres—lyric, epic, hymnic etc.—would tend to use different modes, pitches, and genera. While the choice of mode and genus would have had a marked effect on the detailed performance of the tune, the melodic contours of a song would have been largely dictated by the way words were naturally pronounced. If socalled lyric poetry composed in strophic form was sung to melodies which by and large observed the natural pitch variations of the words, their precise responsional identity would have resided principally in their rhythmical, modal, and (where appropriate) their choric aspects, rather than the notebynote shape of their melodies.

Evidence for the melodic practice of Choruses in tragedy suggests that, until the time of Euripides, failure to observe the natural pitchaccents of words was the exception rather than the rule. In a passage of PseudoAristotle's *Problems* (19.918b) the question is asked:

> Why were *nomoi* (musical tunes) not composed with responsion, while choral songs were? Is it because the *nomoi* were performed by professional musicians who were already capable of acting and sustaining their voices, so that what they sang *could* be long and complicated?

The answer is affirmative. Songs of the kind composed by Timotheus and professionals of his ilk would have been harder for Choruses to memorize or perform because they lacked the repetitive rhythms and movements familiar to musically competent nonprofessionals. By contrast, the author continues,

> antistrophes are simple: they have one dancerhythm and one meter. Is this why solo stagearias are not responsional, while choral arias are? Yes, because the stage performer is a professional actor; but the Chorus is not required to act to the same extent.

It is significant that the author mentions identity in strophic responsion of *dancerhythm* and *meter*, but not identity of *melody*. This accords well with the suggestion that there were traditional principles for interpreting pitch accents within standard *harmoniai*. The resulting

melodies would have had a sufficiently "natural" shape and feel for welltrained non professional Choruses to remember them in conjunction with formal rhythmical structures and repetitive dance movements.

A feature of the socalled Alphabet Drama of Callias, described in a passage of the second–third century AD author Athenaeus, may have a bearing (whatever the passage's riddling import, for which see Smith (2003) and Dunn in this volume) on Euripides' exceptionalism in regard to melodic composition. In Callias' play (which was evidently a comedy), 24 comic actors played the parts of letters of the alphabet, dancing in various combinations to act out the way the letters of the alphabet combine to produce syllables and words. Athenaeus' description is as follows (10.453de):

> The Chorus of women is composed so that the letters, lining up in pairs, are set to meter and melody as follows: beta alpha *ba*, beta ei *be*, beta eta *bē*, beta iota *bi*, beta oˇ *b*oˇ, beta u *bu*, beta ō *bō*. The letters are set to the same melody and meter in the antistrophe, i.e. gamma alpha [*ga*], gamma ei [*ge*] [etc.]. And so on for the remaining syllables in each case, with the same meter and melody used in each antistrophe. Hence it may not only be supposed that Euripides composed the entire *Medea* on this precedent, but it is also clear that he transferred this very form of the melody.

The final words here, "this very form of melody" (*to melos auto*), might be taken to signify a melodic structure in which, as in the Alphabet Drama described, the tune of the antistrophe is precisely identical to that of the strophe. If so, it may be that the Chorus of the Alphabet Drama was unusual in using an identical *melos* for both strophe and antistrophe, and that Euripides was doing something worthy of remark when he adopted this practice in his *Medea* of 431 BCE (a tragedy notable for the Chorus' emphasis on the novelty of its music).

This passage may point to the fact, then, that Euripides was known to have broken with traditional principles of matching word pitch with musical pitch in the responsional Choruses of his tragic dramas. The composition of sung music will have formerly involved applying conventional formulae to create melodies based on the inherent pitch accents of words; but in view of the decline of traditional melodic skills and welleducated amateur choreuts, the time had come for Choruses to learn to sing fixed melodies. Liberated from tonic constraints, these would have appealed to younger ears less attuned to traditional forms, but they struck traditionalists as lacking propriety and discipline—at best an unwelcome modernism, at worst a symptom of barbarity and licentiousness. Popular audiences of the time approved the music as exciting and modern: Timotheus' works continued to be reperformed for centuries (Csapo and Wilson (2009)), while the music of Euripidean drama, notoriously avantgarde in its time, appears to have attracted a similar degree both of popular acclaim and posthumous admiration.

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FURTHER READING

Csapo (2000) presents an important study of Euripidean tragedy in relationship to the “New Music”; Csapo (2004) is a brilliant discussion of sociological and technical aspects of that phenomenon. Wilson (1999) and (2004) study the significance of aulos and strings respectively; while Csapo and Wilson (2009) convincingly reverse the traditionally dismissive and negative portrayals of Timotheus.

The most comprehensive collection of translated sources for Greek music is Barker (1984–89; two volumes), with commentary; Csapo and Slater ((1994) 331–48) collect sources on music relating to theater. Thorough general studies of ancient Greek music are those of West (1992) and Landels (1999); Pöhlmann and West (2001) assemble, transcribe, and discuss the musical papyri.

The aural effect and musical interpretation of what is known about ancient Greek melody and of the surviving fragments is an underdeveloped area. In D’Angour (2007) I raise some general considerations about the aural context of Greek music; while D’Angour (2013) aims to give practical expression to the principles of composition proposed in D’Angour (2006). Currently the most accurate realizations of the fragmentary ancient melodies may be heard on the Web at http://www.oeaw.ac.at/kal/agm/.

PART VI
Topics and Approaches

CHAPTER 29
Euripides and his Intellectual Context

Francis M. Dunn

> *When Timotheus was hissed at for his innovations and was said to be violating music, Euripides told him to take heart since in a short time the theaters would be under his spell.*
>
> (*Plutarch*, Moralia *795D = Euripides T 87b* TrGF)

Timotheus, the most important composer of his time, nevertheless had to weather hostile reaction to his avantgarde style. According to a longer version of the anecdote above (Satyrus = T 87a *TrGF*), he was so discouraged by his negative reception that he was about to commit suicide when Euripides not only encouraged him but also helped compose his famous lyric poem *Persians*. Conversely, Euripides' own musical innovations (polymetric songs, use of "color") are widely thought to have been influenced by Timotheus (starting with Bassett (1931), compare Porter (1994) 199–207). Hence arises a dilemma: was Euripides influenced by Timotheus or the other way around? The question of priority coincides with a problem of dating. In Euripides' *Orestes* the aria of a Phrygian slave has striking similarities to the *Persians* of Timotheus; since Euripides' play was produced in 408, it follows that those who give priority to Euripides date Timotheus' poem after that year, while those who see the lyric poet influencing the playwright date it earlier.

Yet models of influence, which assume the priority and superiority of inventor to borrower, neglect the fluid processes by which multiple creators together contribute to change and experimentation. This is more obvious when we are dealing with figures whose work is closely related such as Timotheus and Euripides, both of whom were poets and musicians (on Euripidean music see Csapo (1999/2000) and D'Angour in this volume). In what follows I argue that it is also true of a wide range of endeavors, from the use of writing to thinking about human agency, so that we can speak of Euripides as less a creature of his times than a contributor on several fronts to the intellectual ferment of latefifth century Athens. I have chosen five representative areas to suggest both the breadth of innovation in this period and the degree of Euripides' involvement.

1 Literacy and the Alphabet

The spread of literacy played a major part in cultural developments of the fifth and fourth centuries. The technological achievement of adapting the Phoenician alphabet to the Greek language had taken place at least two centuries earlier, and in the course of the fifth century it was put to greater use by poets and politicians, by law courts and legislators. The significance of this change is registered in Aeschylus' *Prometheus*, where the Titan lists among the crucial skills of civilized humans "the combining of letters" which is "the source of all memory and

parent of the arts" (γραμμάτων τε συνθέσεις,/μνήμην ἁπάντων, μουσομήτορ' ἐργάνην, 460–1). Yet it is too often assumed that the advent of writing, by a sort of technological determinism, triggered cultural innovation. Thus Eric Havelock (1963) argues that literacy made possible the abstract thought and reasoning that in turn gave rise to Platonic philosophy, and Jennifer Wise (1998) proposes that the genre of Greek tragedy arose precisely because poets had the use of written scripts (compare Nellhaus (1989)). The following examples will show instead how dramatists in general, and Euripides in particular, played an active part in this story.

Toward the end of the fifth century the comic poet Callias presented *Alphabet Show* (γραμματικὴ θεωρία, Callias T 7 *PCG*; see also D'Angour in this volume). The surviving fragments of this work have often been read with a view to establishing dates and influence. For example, the likelihood that the comic Chorus consisted of the twentyfour letters of the Ionic alphabet, which was officially adopted by Athens in 403, is taken as providing a *terminus post quem* for the play's composition; this date, in turn, has suggested to scholars that Callias was influenced by Euripides and not (as Athenaeus reports) the other way around (thus Rosen (1999) followed by Slater (2002), an opposing view in Ruijgh (2001)). Yet our source Athenaeus (10. 453c–454a) provides material which suggests a more fluid and interactive engagement with the uses of literacy.

The prologue of Callias' play, as Athenaeus explains, sets the scene by naming the members of the alphabetic Chorus in four iambic trimeters (I follow the Greek text of Olson (2006)); translations here and elsewhere are my own):

The letter alpha, beta, gamma, delta, Apollo's e,

zeta, eta, theta, iota, kappa, labda, mu,

nu, xi, the letter o, pi, rho, sigma, tau, the letter u,

also phi and chi next to the letter psi, ending with the letter ô.

(453d.1–4)

The kind of ditty that children have used since writing began to help memorize their letters is here transposed into the meter of tragedy and comedy and recited by the prologue speaker to the festival audience. Shortly thereafter the Chorus itself marches on stage, singing and dancing the various permutations of consonant plus vowel:

beta alpha – BA, beta e – BE,

beta eta – BÊ, beta iota – BI,

beta o – BO, beta u – BU,

beta ô – BÔ.

Music and meter are repeated in the antistrophe for the next consonant,

gamma alpha – GA, gamma e – GE,

gamma eta – GÊ, gamma iota – GI,

gamma o – GO, gamma u – GU,

gamma ô – GÔ,

(453d.7–12)

and the Chorus continues with all the remaining combinations as each consonant takes a turn dancing with all seven vowels in a row (a detailed reconstruction is proposed by Ruijgh (2001)). The process of writing and sounding out syllables, the building blocks of written words, is thus staged as an elaborate exercise complete with the music, meter, and strophic form of dramatic lyrics. Finally Athenaeus describes one more scene, a section of fastpaced dialogue (453f.2–454a.1) in which a character coaches the Chorus, first in reciting aloud the name of each vowel, then in saying aloud all seven together, and finally in repeating the names to themselves. This tutorial episode enacts the process of memorizing and internalizing the vowels so as to master more fluently the syllabic combinations (for ancient and modern parallels in learning the syllables, see Johnson (2011)).

What do we make of this strange performance? According to a linear model of influence, the introduction of the Ionic alphabet in 403 prompted our comic playwright to have fun with these letters on stage, perhaps making fun of the city's newly official orthography. Yet the fragments' preoccupation with pedagogy and with the technical means of acquiring literacy requires some explanation; the detailed account in Athenaeus, after all, describes something like the rhymes and mnemonics of *Sesame Street*, all dressed up in the language and conventions of the theater. Learning one's letters and their combinations is thus the object of fun and at the same time endowed with public importance; the resulting incongruity mundane and childish exercises together with tragic form (Ruijgh (2001) 271–273)—challenges the assembled citizens and perhaps invites them to ponder the civic importance of learning one's ABCs.

Callias' *Alphabet Show* was not alone in its engagement with the civic role of the alphabet. Around the same time, several tragedians made striking use of the alphabet. The first of these (under the influence of Callias, according to Athenaeus) was Euripides in his nowlost *Theseus*. As Athenaeus reports:

An illiterate herder is there, trying to describe an inscription with the name of Theseus, as follows:

I am born ignorant of writing,

but I'll tell you the shapes and give clear signs.

There's a circle measured out as if on a lathe,

having a clear mark in the middle.

As for the second, there are two lines, first of all,

and, joining them, one more in the middle.

The third is like a curling lock of hair;

as for the fourth, one line stands up straight,

and three slanting ones lean against it.

The fifth letter is not easy to describe:

there are two lines an interval apart

but they run together in a single base.

And the last letter is just like the third.

(10. 454b5–c9)

The herdsman is probably a Cretan announcing the arrival of victims from Athens destined for King Minos' deadly labyrinth—a rustic individual whose ignorance of the alphabet contrasts with the more educated Athenians within and without the drama. The contrast is ironically effective because the word he cannot read is the name of Athens' early king and the embodiment of its culture (Theseus, or ΘΗΣΕΥΣ). Interestingly, despite his ignorance the herdsman has learned to identify the shapes of individual letters and, what is more, has successfully committed these letters to memory in their correct order. He thus performs the first stage of acquiring literacy, and does so in a context where this skill is more closely associated with Athens.

Writing and literacy were not only further advanced at this time in Athens than anywhere else in the Greek world, but were increasingly associated with Athenian democratic and cultural institutions (Meritt (1940) 87–94, with cautions added by Hedrick (1994)). The city announced events on wooden panels and displayed actions of the assembly in stone inscriptions, thus enacting the openness of its government; it also kept careful records of priests and officials, budgets and expenses, plays and festivals, thus using the technology of writing to document the city's achievements. All this stands in ironic contrast to the ignorance of the Cretan herder, who neither comprehends the name of Athens' greatest hero nor fathoms the cultural greatness of his home.

This theatrical device—by which a messenger in tragedy communicates using letters he does

not understand—was imitated at least twice, once by Euripides' contemporary Agathon (in his *Telephus*, 39 F4 *TrGF*) and again by the fourthcentury tragedian Theodectas (72 F6 *TrGF*). Both tragedians played with Euripides' version by offering alternative ways to describe the same six letters in Theseus' name, Agathon going so far as to describe each successive letter in its own line of verse. I suspect that what made Euripides' invention in *Theseus* so memorable was his association of literacy with Theseus, Athens, and the city's cultural hegemony—this through spelling out the name of the city's archetypal hero. Callias and Euripides each in his own way makes a spectacle of literacy while also acting out its importance for the city.

2 Specialized Skills

This same period also saw the development of *technai* (τέχναι) in the sense of coherent and systematic procedures for teaching certain skills. Thus a rhetorical *technê* taught one how to become an effective speaker, a medical *technê* helped one master the art of healing, and—most controversially—a political *technê*, according to Protagoras, could teach one how to be a good citizen (Plato, *Protagoras* 318e–319a; on rhetoric and medicine see Lloyd (1979) 79–98). In his comedy *Frogs*, Aristophanes seems to imagine Euripides offering a comparable instruction in dramatic *technê*, as if he were a carpenter building a house: he teaches how to use "subtle rulers and verbal setsquares" (956), calls for "rulers and cubits and folding frames · · · and set squares and wedges" (799–801), and teaches people how to think by "putting reason and observation in my *technê* " (973–4; on Euripides' use of such language, see Stieber (2011) 340–360). It so happens that the comic poet's insinuations are borne out by the tragedian's explicit engagement with debates on poetic and intellectual *technai*.

Euripides' *Antiope*, now lost, featured a famous debate between Amphion and Zethus (the twin sons of Antiope, wife of the murdered king of Thebes) over the relative values of a life of action and one of contemplation. The surviving fragments suggest that after Amphion entered singing the praises of the lyre, his brother appeared and denounced both Amphion's music and the indolent life that music (to Zethus) represents (reconstruction and translation in Collard and Cropp (2008) 170–227). In explaining their career choices, both twins reveal not just divergent values but also fundamentally different views on how a person might best realize his potential. According to Zethus, an individual's potential is given by his nature or *physis* (φύσις), and the more noble (γενναῖος) one's nature, the more one is capable of; yet Amphion with his effeminate pursuits, his brother argues, has betrayed his own innate nobility (F 185.1–2 *TGF*). Furthermore, by a kind of *noblesse oblige*, those with innate potential must (according to Zethus) devote great effort and long hours to fulfilling it:

in this

each man shines and he strives for this,

devoting to it most of the day—that

in which he happens to be at his best.

(F 184)

The result of these exertions will be effectiveness in the three main areas of social relations—household, friends, and city—whereas failure to make such an effort will lead to the opposite:

When a man who owns a good living
lets household affairs run to neglect
yet constantly chases his pleasure in song,
he'll turn out useless at home and in city
and a zero for his friends; his nature is lost
when he succumbs to sweet pleasure.

(F 187)

One's duty to nurture natural gifts is bound up, according to Zethus, with the rustic or primitive values of physical labor—"digging, ploughing land, tending flocks" (188.4)—while music and art, by contrast, he associates with laziness, effeminacy, and cowardice. *Technê*, in other words, although claiming to offer wisdom, is instead a source of corruption: "how is this wise, when *technê* takes a person of natural talent and makes him worse?" (F 186). The herdsman Zethus thus makes a doublebarreled attack on his brother the musician, first setting forth the premise that achievements based on nature are superior to those developed through *technê*, deeming the latter selfindulgent and contrived; and second, using prejudicial language such as "effeminate" and "useless" to discredit his opponent.

Amphion's response is as effective as it is unexpected. Given that the brothers are twins and at a later date will both, according to legend, take part in founding the city of Thebes, we might expect Amphion to argue that the musician is just as useful to his community as the herdsman. Instead he turns Zethus' own premise against him and praises a life of inactivity and pleasure: "Anyone who works hard when he can do nothing is a fool, when he can have a life of pleasant inactivity" (F 193). This seemingly paradoxical assertion is maintained by arguing that the inactive person better serves his city and friends because he never puts them at risk:

A quiet person is a sure friend to friends
and best for his city. Don't approve of risk
taking! I don't like a sailor who is
overly bold, nor such a leader of the land.

(F 194)

As for household affairs, Amphion likewise inverts the premise that hard work is more responsible than pleasure. Since wealth and belongings are transitory, acquiring without enjoying them is misguided (196.4–5), and a person who gets no pleasure from his belongings does not deserve to be called "prosperous" but rather "a happy sentry of belongings" (F 198).

The other component of Amphion's rebuttal—at least insofar as we can reconstruct it—exploits his brother's prejudicial language against him. Zethus associated natural and innate (rather than acquired) abilities with physical toil and its presumed virtue, and the musician replies by setting physical capacities in opposition to mental ones: "if I can think well this is better than a strong arm" (F 199). As Amphion points out, mental qualities are precisely those of most value to household and city:

A man's judgement governs cities well,

and households, and is also of great strength in war.

A single wise plan defeats many hands

and the greatest evil is ignorance in a crowd.

(F 200)

Thus music, which Zethus forcefully disparaged, is associated by his brother with both wisdom and the prudent management of political affairs:

For my part, may I sing and say something

wise, stirring up none of the city's ills.

(F 202)

Rhetorical debates are common in Euripides, and they follow judicial precedent in that the accuser or plaintiff speaks first and the defendant second. Although the latter is often more sympathetic, Euripides tends to avoid portraying either speaker as "winner" and this seems to hold true also in *Antiope* (Lloyd (1992) 15–7, compare Natanblut (2009)). Zethus makes a forceful case that would resonate among the spectators with its praise of hard work and suspicion of intellectuals, yet his argument is also simplistic and misguided, trotting out clichés while attacking an institution—music—that was central to Greek culture. Amphion's rejoinder might be termed sophistic in its rhetorical skill but it is not "merely" sophistic, and the interwoven themes of the usefulness of *technê*, the value of pleasure and the arts, and the need for prudence and wisdom, would win approval from an Athenian audience as least as much as his brother's diatribe.

All the same, it must have been surprising to hear Amphion defend the musical profession by accepting Zethus' imputation of idleness and effeminacy and by setting private, intellectual, and elite values above public, practical, and popular ones (on political overtones of the debate, see the different readings of Carter (1986) 163–173, Podlecki (1996) and Wilson (1999/2000) 440–449). Both the novelty and the success of Amphion's rebuttal seem to be reflected in Plato's extended allusion to the brothers' debate. In *Gorgias*, Socrates explains that "our discussion concerns what kind of life one ought to live" (500b), and the issues at stake are placed in clear relief when Callicles interrupts to deliver a speech deriding what he calls Socrates' sophomoric games, arguing that right consists, by nature, in the advantage of the stronger, and contrasting the ineffectual life of the philosopher with the practical life of a

public figure. The pursuit of philosophy is suitable only in the young, like babytalk and children's games, Callicles asserts, adding:

> I suppose I feel now what Zethus (whom I mentioned earlier) felt toward Amphion in Euripides. For I am moved to say to you the same things that he said to his brother: "You neglect, Socrates, what you ought to care for and, though you possess a noble nature and spirit, you call attention to yourself with your childish antics. You could neither advance a proper argument in the councils of justice, nor utter anything probable and persuasive, nor offer any brilliant counsel on another person's behalf."
>
> (485e–486a)

The brash Callicles, playing Zethus to Socrates' Amphion, quotes from *Antiope* at length to portray his interlocutor as effeminate, aloof, and useless in the public sphere (on Plato's use of Euripides, see Nightingale (1992) and Trivigno (2009)).

Socrates, for his part, at first responds dialectically, exposing inconsistencies in Callicles' claim that justice consists in the advantage of the stronger. Yet after his respondent becomes increasingly sullen, then silent, Socrates launches into an exposition of his own "to pay back a speech of Amphion for that of Zethus" (506b). As Amphion had done earlier, Socrates turns Callicles' own criteria against him, showing that since (as they agreed) doing harm is worse than suffering it, those with political power and influence (like Amphion's rash sailor) are *less* able to protect their friends and family (509b–d). Furthermore, just as Amphion had said that beautiful things need to be enjoyed, Socrates argues that we should seek, not mere length of life, but "how best to live whatever length of life awaits us" (512e). Finally Socrates reinforces his speech with a myth of the afterlife where those who have done harm are punished while those who have not are rewarded—where Rhadamanthys, judge of the shades, seeing the soul "of a philosopher who minded his own business and was not a busybody during his life, is delighted and sends it to the Isles of the Blest" (526c).

Plato, of course, is making a fundamentally different point from Euripides (Carter (1986) 173–177). For the philosopher and mystic, the contrast between two professions reflects a more fundamental contrast between opinion and knowledge, and to convey their implications he resorts to a final opposition between the world of the living and the Underworld. The playwright, by contrast, uses the debate between musician and herdsman to point up a wider debate in Athens over changing cultural values, and he conveys the importance of these values for a community by choosing as opponents the two brothers who would eventually found the city of Thebes. The debate in Euripides touches on the same conflicts between old and new, rustic and urbane, brawn and brains as do the conflicts between Stronger and Weaker Argument in Aristophanes' *Clouds* and between Aeschylus and Euripides in his *Frogs*. Hence it is all the more striking that Plato alludes so extensively to *Antiope*, writing as he did nearly a generation later when those particular conflicts were no longer current. I believe that what drew Plato to Euripides' play was less the issues *per se* than Amphion's ability, when faced down by a figure embodying bourgeois attitudes and derided for his profession, to show that he is, in fact, more in tune with popular values than his selfsatisfied opponent. Together, defense of one's profession or *technê* and a radical redefinition of civic values, are a potent

combination by which Euripides reinscribes the marginalized artist within his community. A generation later Plato revives and revises Euripides, replacing inclusion with an inverted exclusion (his Socrates does not really *want* to be embraced by the city), and suggesting that true civic excellence belongs to the philosopher and not the politician.

3 Relativism and Humanism

During the late fifth century, critical attention was devoted not just to human arts and skills but also to human experience. One such inquiry involved knowledge, as thinkers turned from investigating the (objective) world or *kosmos* around them to asking how people (subjectively) acquired such knowledge. Protagoras famously announced that "Of all things the measure is a person, of things that are—that they are, of those that are not—that they are not" (B1 D–K). By this he meant that knowledge of the world is conditioned and relative: it is conditioned by the human faculties with which we perceive and apprehend things, and it is relative insofar as it may vary with the individual and with circumstances (Cole (1972), Woodruff (1999)). As Socrates explains in Plato's *Theaetetus*:

> Sometimes, when the wind itself blows, does one of us become chilly, but not the other? Or one slightly chilly, but the other intensely? · · · Will we agree with Protagoras that it is cold for the man who is chilly, but not cold for the one who isn't chilly?
>
> (152b.2–8)

Plato has Socrates describe this view in order to argue against it, and in Protagoras' own time this argument circumscribing human knowledge must have seemed especially disconcerting. An immediate corollary, for example, is a form of agnosticism. Since gods are categorically distinct from humans, they cannot be apprehended by human faculties and therefore, as Protagoras stated in his work *On the Gods*:

> concerning the gods, I am not in a position to know either that they exist, or that they do not exist; for there are many obstacles in the way of such knowledge, notably the intrinsic obscurity of the subject and the shortness of human life.
>
> (B4 D–K)

Some time afterwards, Gorgias responded to this challenge by trumping it. In a work titled *On Not Being*, he argued "first, that nothing exists; second, that even if anything exists, it cannot be apprehended by a person; and third, that even if anything is apprehensible, it certainly is inexpressible and incommunicable to one's neighbor" (B3 D–K; on Euripides and the sophists, see further Wright in this volume).

These are radical challenges to knowledge and belief, and the arguments of Protagoras, Gorgias, and other thinkers were no doubt welcomed as liberating by some while denounced as blasphemous by others. Aristophanes' *Clouds* conveys a sense of the negative reaction, when Socrates explains to the young Strepsiades that the singing clouds before him are the only real divinities:

Strepsiades:

Mother Earth, what a voice! How holy and august and marvelous!

Socrates:

Because they are the only goddesses; all the others are rubbish.

Strepsiades:

Come on, by Earth, don't you count Olympian Zeus a god?

Socrates:

What do you mean, Zeus? Stop driveling. There is no Zeus!

(364–7)

This period is often described as one of crisis, in which familiar beliefs were shaken by intellectual ferment, moral relativism, and notorious acts of impiety such as the Profanation of the Mysteries and the Mutilation of the Hermae (Arrowsmith (1963), recent reassessments in Osborne (2007)). Yet it would oversimplify to associate these changes only with anxiety and disturbance, and our best evidence for this comes from Euripides.

Although by ancient criteria a tragedy, Euripides' *Helen* might well be called his "Comedy of Errors"—or, better yet, his "Comedy of Human Knowledge" (see also Boedeker's discussion of the play in this volume.) The central premise of the plot is that Helen never really went to Troy but was carried off to Egypt, while the Greeks and Trojans fought their war over a phantom. This revisionist account had already been used by Simonides to rehabilitate Helen's reputation, and by Herodotus to demonstrate the wisdom and piety of the Egyptians. Although Euripides at times seems prepared to mine this version for lessons on the wastefulness of war (Papi (1987)), he exploits it primarily to dramatize the shock of discovering that things are not as they seem (Solmsen (1934), Segal (1971), Conacher (1998) 74–83).

As the play begins Helen, held captive in Egypt, briefly encounters Teucer, a Greek soldier wandering in exile who brings her news from the outside world. As Menelaus will be later, Teucer is shocked to find in this exotic locale a woman identical to the one he fought for at Troy, yet unlike Menelaus he is initially untroubled by the conflict between knowledge and perception. It is Helen who raises questions, asking if Teucer really knows what he saw:

Helen:

Did you really see the wretched women, or are you telling me what you heard?

Teucer:

Just as I see you now with my own eyes, no less.

Helen:

Think if this was maybe an impression from the gods.

Teucer:

Talk about something else; enough about her!

Helen:

Do you think your impressions are so reliable?

Teucer:

Yes, I saw her with my eyes, so the mind can see.

(117–22)

The comic irony is that, while looking at Helen and speaking to her, Teucer so confidently asserts that the apparition in Troy was the real Helen because the eyes are reliable conduits of knowledge.

The confusions proliferate when Menelaus, shipwrecked but alive, having left his wife and companions by the shore, enters and is told by the king's gatekeeper that Helen of Sparta, the daughter of Zeus and Tyndareus, is inside the house. In that case, Menelaus concludes, we must accept that what we see and denote with words does not correspond to what really is:

What do I make of some other woman living inside

This house and having the same name as my wife?

And she said this one is daughter of Zeus by birth:

Then is there some male by the name of Zeus living

On the banks of the Nile? There is only one in heaven.

And where on earth is Sparta except where Eurotas

Ripples gladly among reeds, and nowhere else?

There is just one by the name of Tyndareus.

And what land has the same name as Sparta,

And as Troy? I do not know what I should say.

There must be, so it seems, in many lands, many

People with the same names, and many cities,

And many wives! So this is nothing remarkable.

(487–99)

Menelaus trumps Teucer as Gorgias trumped Protagoras, extending his critique to all three areas—our impressions of the world, the external objects corresponding to those impressions, and the words we use to denote those objects. He consequently accepts the existence of two Zeuses, two Tyndareuses and two Spartas, with a comic irony trumping that between Helen and Teucer.

A comic misrecognition scene follows as Helen, informed that her husband has washed up nearby, enters from the house, sees Menelaus, and rushes to embrace him. Menelaus is less ready to accept the existence of two wives in the flesh than in the abstract, but Helen insists:

> *Helen*:
>
> There is no other wife of yours except for me.
>
> *Menelaus*:
>
> Don't I think straight? Is my vision deranged?
>
> *Helen:*
>
> When you look at me, don't you seem to see your wife?
>
> *Menelaus*:
>
> The body is similar, but certainty escapes me.
>
> *Helen*:
>
> Look! What more do you need? Who is smarter than you?
>
> *Menelaus*:
>
> You resemble her, I cannot deny it.
>
> *Helen*:
>
> And who will instruct you if not your eyes?
>
> *Menelaus*:
>
> But they are deranged, if I have another wife.
>
> (574–81)

The comic irony here involves a paradox in that Menelaus, who embraces the progressive notion that sense perceptions need not correspond to an objective reality, is clearly mistaken, while Helen, who accepts a naive version of "seeing is believing," is, as the spectators know, correct. And even though Helen goes on to explain that her image at Troy was created from air by Hera to cheat Paris and Aphrodite, Menelaus continues objecting until a servant rushes in with the news that the other Helen has just flown up into the sky, revealing that she was indeed

a phantom!

Euripides' *Helen*, as scholars have noted, thematizes intellectual concerns such as the opposition between word and deed, and the gap between appearance and reality, but it does so not to advance a philosophical argument nor to parody the preoccupations of intellectuals, but to explore the dramatic—and especially comic—implications of those concerns. After Helen has been reunited with her husband, and after she (not Menelaus) has devised a scheme for them to escape from their captors, the Chorus meditates on the twists and turns of events by likewise invoking—on a dramatic rather than intellectual level—the perplexing divide between humans and gods:

What god is, what is not god, what is in between—

Can you say? Even if a mortal has searched

And found the furthest limit, has seen the divine world

There, and came back here again leaping

By unexpected, contradictory chance?

You, Helen, were born daughter of Zeus

Who, as a bird, fathered you in the lap of Leda—

And then were denounced through Greece

As traitor, liar, lawless, godless!

(1137–48)

For Protagoras, the categorical difference between mortal and divine illustrates the insurmountable limits to human knowledge; Euripides, by contrast, takes this same difference as a source of paradoxical confusion regarding a person's birth and reputation. For Protagoras, we might say, the glass is half empty, since an entire realm of human belief is closed off from true knowledge; for Euripides, it is half full since we now have a convenient (if not entirely rigorous) way to account for the baffling state of human understanding. The playwright is not passively reacting to developments in the intellectual world, but is creatively playing out their human implications and actively proposing a more constructive understanding of them.

4 Anthropology and Progress

I turn now to an intellectual inquiry that overlaps to some extent with the two preceding topics. Some writers during this period worked out what have been called the first models of human progress, reconstructing the process by which humans—starting from a primitive or bestial condition—gradually acquired the skills and capacities that set them apart from animals and serve as hallmarks of an advanced culture (Edelstein (1967), Blundell (1986)). A relatively simple example of this progressive view is the speech of Prometheus in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, where the Titan proclaims that he found the human race in a helpless state

and provided them with intelligence and skills such as housebuilding, agriculture, augury, and medicine (441–506). A more sophisticated version is sketched in the first stasimon of Sophocles' *Antigone*, sometimes dubbed the "Ode to Man." Here we are told that humans have the special talent of inventing new skills as they are needed, whether hunting or seafaring, medicine or government: "whatever the future brings, he faces it resourcefully" (360–61). In Aeschylus, progress involves a simple shift from before to after; in Sophocles, it entails incremental improvements that continue into the future and thus—because the future cannot be known—may or may not be for the best: "with an ability to contrive skills that is clever beyond belief, [humankind] moves now toward evil, now toward good" (365–67).

The skills or *technai* discussed above were thus felt in this period to be an important part of human progress; yet just as assumptions about knowledge of the world came under scrutiny, so too did confidence in cultural progress. We get a hint of this in the implicit warning at the end of Sophocles' ode ("now toward evil, now toward good"), but for a direct, explicit critique we must turn instead to a later work, the *Sisyphus* attributed either to Critias or Euripides. Sisyphus, the legendary criminal (and father of Odysseus), here explains how in the course of human development legal systems arose:

There was a time when the life of humans was chaotic

and bestial and ruled by force,

when there was neither reward for the good

nor punishment for the bad.

Then, it seems to me, men established

laws to punish, so justice would rule

· · · and keep violence enslaved;

if someone did wrong he paid the penalty.

(1–8, Kritias 88 B25 D–K)

This account is similar to Sophocles' in that humans are able to master their circumstances by establishing laws (5–6); however, progress turns out to be less straightforward and discoveries do not always live up to their promise:

Then, since the laws prevented them from openly

doing deeds of violence

and they would do them secretly, then it seems to me

some shrewd, wiseminded man first

invented for mortals fear of the gods, so

bad men would have something to fear if they act

or speak or think, even secretly.

(9–15)

According to Sisyphus, the invention of laws failed to improve the human condition and society therefore slipped back toward the rule of force; the solution came from a different source—a clever man able to bamboozle others. In presenting his cynical view of law and justice, Sisyphus takes a stand toward the progressive view as critical and challenging as those of Protagoras and Gorgias in relation to human knowledge.

A challenge from a different direction appears in *Cyclops*, Euripides' sole surviving satyr play. Already in Homer's *Odyssey*, the Cyclopes to some extent embody a lack of civilization: these creatures have no ships, build no houses, do not practice agriculture, and have no laws or organized communities. Euripides dramatizes the same general episode as the *Odyssey*, but assimilates the protagonist, Polyphemus, to fifthcentury ideas about the first stages in human development. His Cyclops is no longer the size of a mountain but of human proportions and is diminished—as is typical of comedy and satyr drama—to a disagreeable master despised by his new slaves, Silenus and the Chorus. So when Odysseus arrives onstage he finds not a fabulous monster but a person without any of the skills or capacities by which Greeks would distinguish themselves from animals—or from primitive humans:

Od:

Where are their walls and city towers?

Sil:

There are none. The place is empty of humans, stranger.

Od:

Who inhabits the land? Some race of animals?

Sil:

Cyclopes, living in caves, not gabled houses.

Od:

Who calls the shots? Or has power been nationalized?

Sil:

They are loners. No one listens to anyone else.

Od:

Do they plant Demeter's grain—or how do they live?

Sil:

On milk, and cheese, and the flesh of sheep.

Od:

Do they have Dionysus' drink, stream from the vine?

Sil:

Not at all, so their land is joyless.

Od:

Are they pious and hospitable to strangers?

Sil:

They consider strangers the sweetest of all flesh.

Od:

What? They enjoy the flesh of slaughtered humans?

Sil:

No one ever came here who did not end up eaten.

(115–28)

The last lines imply that Euripides' Polyphemus will eat the raw flesh of humans. This was a monstrous trait of Homer's Cyclops, one that was subsequently rationalized as a practice of primitive people: "they fed on flesh and thus enjoyed feasts of mutual murder. For law was lowly then while force shared the throne of Zeus, and so the weak was food for the stronger" (Moschion 97 F 6.14–17 *TrGF*).

Euripides' oneeyed protagonist, however, differs from a primitive savage in important ways. First, rather than eat meat raw, he not only cooks it but also gives detailed instructions on preparing the flesh of Odysseus and his men: Silenus must sharpen the knives, build a fire,

sacrifice the victims, and present a feast of meat both roasted and boiled (241–46). Medical writers in this period were rationalizing the opposition between raw and cooked in the story of human progress by explaining that grinding, heating, mixing, and so on made otherwise inedible substances amenable to the human digestive system (*Ancient Medicine*, discussion in Dunn (2005)), and in this vein the Cyclops tells Odysseus how he plans to make his flesh palatable: "you shall have fire, and my father's caldron here, and they shall boil your indigestible flesh and render it good" (343–44). After Polyphemus makes his first meal of the men, Odysseus runs from the cave and describes what he has seen: "he set a bronze caldron boiling on the fire; and spits whose points had been sharpened in the fire and shafts smoothed with the adze, cut from thornwood; and for the axe's fodder, sacrificial bowls the size of Etna" (392–95). Then "the godforsaken chef of Hades" killed two men, "and with his greedy cleaver hacked away the flesh and roasted it well on the fire. The rest of their limbs he tossed in a caldron to boil" (401–404). The industrious cook is a familiar figure in comedy, but in this case his technical proficiency places the Cyclops at a civilized stage in human development (Konstan (1981)).

If the *technê* of cooking marks human progress in material terms, eloquence does so at an intellectual level. From the start, Silenus reminds Polyphemus about Odysseus' famous skill in speaking: "I want to give you some advice. Don't overlook any of this man's flesh: if you chew on his tongue, you'll become clever and a constant babbler, Cyclops!" (313–15). This suggestion, appropriately enough, follows on the heels of a speech in which Odysseus defends the Trojan War and craftily argues that Polyphemus should not eat him—on the grounds both that the war kept Hellas safe and sound, and that it killed off almost all the Greek warriors save Odysseus and his band of men (285–312). The Cyclops then trumps the wily son of Sisyphus by undermining the entire system of values on which the hero's argument relies. "Money is the wise man's god, little man, and everything else is clever and beautiful phrases" (316–17), he begins, and proceeds to advance a gargantuan materialism by which (so to speak) Bite makes Right (compare Worman (2002)). Neither his own father Poseidon nor Zeus is important, according to Polypehmus, since neither can impinge on his bodily needs and appetites: "I sacrifice to no one but myself, nor to the gods, only to the greatest god of all, my belly" (334–35); "as for those who embroider human life by inventing laws, to hell with them! I shall keep on doing myself favors—for example, by eating you!" (338–41). The authority of religion and law is thus usurped by immediate selfinterest in a comic analogue to the radical arguments of contemporary thinkers such as Thrasymachus (see Chappell (1993)). Polyphemus concludes with a final audacious flourish, summoning Odysseus and his men: "So come inside, assemble in the hall around the altar of my god, and offer up a feast for me!" (345–46).

The Cyclops will eventually be befuddled by wine, blinded by Odysseus, and forced to release the followers of Dionysus. But in the early scenes he raises interesting questions about human nature, first embodying the absence of all traits of civilization—the raw matter, as it were, from which Greek culture would develop—and then demonstrating such a proficiency in the skills of cooking and rhetoric that he gains the upper hand over the resourceful Odysseus. This is comically incongruous, of course, but it also prompts questions about cultural progress. Is the divide between primitive and developed, between nature and culture, clear or firm? Can

we assume that individuals and societies will incrementally become more advanced? Satyr drama, like comedy, often presents a topsyturvy view of the world, and in *Cyclops* Euripides takes this opportunity to explore and subvert current anthropological models.

5 Agency and Responsibility

Pericles, the Athenian statesman and general, late in his career suffered setbacks both public and personal. Among the latter were vicious rumors spread by his disaffected son Xanthippus. As Plutarch tells it:

> [T]he young man Xanthippus began to revile his father, making fun of his domestic affairs and the conversations he had with sophists. For example, a certain pentathlete accidentally hit Epitimus the Pharsalian with a javelin and killed him, and Pericles wasted a whole day debating with Protagoras whether the javelin, or the one who threw it, or those who organized the games, should in the strictest sense be considered responsible for the death.
>
> (*Pericles* 36)

Xanthippus intends to make his father look ridiculous (and Plutarch, for one, seems to accept that point of view) but we have good reason to suppose that the kind of discussion he describes might be taken very seriously indeed. A set of speeches by the sophist and orator Antiphon addresses exactly this scenario, the prosecution arguing on behalf of a dead boy that the one who threw the javelin should be convicted of murder, the defense countering that because of their negligence, blame should be assigned to the organizers or, preferably, to the dead boy himself (*Tetralogy* 2, text in Gagarin (1997) who favors a single Antiphon at 5–6). The speaker for the prosecution, the dead boy's father, is shocked that the defense makes a case at all, let alone blames the victim, and the ancient listener or reader (at least initially) likely felt the same way.

The boy's father assumes there is no room for debate since he thinks that the one who caused the accident by throwing the javelin is therefore legally and morally responsible. His opponent's arguments suggest, however, that this is naive and simplistic: perhaps the boy acted rashly by running onto the field to retrieve a javelin at the wrong time, perhaps the authorities were negligent in not making sure such an accident could not occur, and in all events, if the thrower did not shoot wide but aimed successfully at the target, how can he be held guilty of a crime? The point here is that the question of responsibility is not as simple as it seems. And the point is nontrivial; an unreflective view of a basic concept such as responsibility may turn out to need substantial correction.

The kind of event debated in both these examples is "critical" in the sense that an accidental death at the games is a major event and much is at stake in determining who is responsible. Yet the question of responsibility also extends to ordinary situations where much less is at stake. In a work titled *Homonoia* or "On Concord," Antiphon suggests that ordinary moments deserve our attention just as much as critical ones (B49 D–K). This work does not survive complete, but the remaining fragments include an intriguing account of the problems and uncertainties which a man might encounter at various stages in life (compare Dunn (2007) 57–64). The

fragment begins as a young man enters adulthood and describes how the decision to embark upon marriage, which may have seemed fairly simple, is exceedingly complex, not only because the young man cannot foresee whether his wife will be compatible, but also because their marriage will now involve him in important social alliances not easily broken. Moreover, as Antiphon goes on to say, even when the woman *is* compatible, she will inevitably bring more work for the man who will now have two people to look after. In enumerating the joys and hardships he may encounter, the sophist shows how an ordinary event—a young man's decision to marry—entails serious obligations and responsibilities; as a consequence, although the young man is the agent in choosing to marry, that action and all it entails profoundly alter the scope of action subsequently open to him. An ordinary decision, in other words, can alter a person's very capacity to act.

Euripides in a posthumous drama pushes even further these explorations in agency and responsibility. *Iphigenia at Aulis*, produced some time after 405 *bce*, dramatizes one of the most critical moments in Greek legend—the decision of Agamemnon to sacrifice his daughter for the sake of the Trojan expedition. For Aeschylus, this decision is so pivotal that he places it at the center of the parodos or entrance song in *Agamemnon*, the first play of the *Oresteia*. There, the Chorus dwells upon that decision, the omens that led up to it, and the pitiful death of Iphigenia that followed—certain that what the king and father did on that day will have dire consequences in the present. Yet they also mystify it, describing Agamemnon as an agent somehow subject, like a domestic animal, to the compulsion of a yoke:

When he put on the yoke of necessity,

impiously turning his mind to breathe

impure, unholy, then he

changed his mind to daring all.

(218–21)

Euripides, by contrast, devotes an entire play to unpacking that critical moment, clarifying rather than mystifying the competing interests at play, and teasing out the ordinary considerations that feed into an action of profound importance.

This new perspective is signaled from the start of *Iphigenia* with an experimental prologue: rather than begin with a narrative prologue explaining how the situation arose, the play begins with a hesitant and uncertain exchange between the king and an old servant (Knox (1979)) consisting not of spoken dialogue but of recitative anapests broken unevenly between the two speakers. When the old man asks Agamemnon what is troubling him, the king replies that he envies the old man's simple life. The servant praises instead a wellborn life and Agamemnon answers:

A good thing that will trip you up.

Honor is sweet,

but when it comes, it causes pain.

Something amiss among the gods

ruined one life; the minds of men,

hard to please,

crushed another.

(21–7)

The king, whose power would seem to provide greater control over events, is more subject than a servant to life's uncertainties. Only gradually do we learn of his distress: the king was seen sealing a letter, then tearing it open, over and over, acting like a madman in his helplessness (40–2). And only after this does Agamemnon explain the reasons—Calchas' instructions to sacrifice Iphigenia, his own decision to refuse, then his scheme to lure his daughter to Aulis, and then his further decision to disavow this scheme (49–114). We witness this critical moment as it were from the inside, as the ruler wavers in his distress.

The playwright might have stopped here, having dissected the king's apparently fateful decision into a multitude of smaller choices, but he goes further, showing that the decision is in some ways not Agamemnon's at all. Human agency is embedded in a whole nexus of relations, and the power to make this momentous choice is constrained by corresponding debts and obligations. As Agamemnon attempts to reverse his decision, he confronts the many strands of this web: the Old Man anticipates the anger of Achilles (124–35), Menelaus intercepts the letter to ensure the fleet will sail, and then, as the brothers argue, a messenger announces that Clytemnestra has arrived. Agamemnon's response marks his distance from his counterpart in Aeschylus. According to the Chorus in *Agamemnon*, the commander "changed his mind" (μετέγνω 221) when he put on the yoke of necessity and "dared to become the sacrificial killer of his daughter" (223–4), but in *Iphigenia* he laments that he has fallen into (ἐμπεπτώκαμεν) this same device: "Alas, what can I say in my misery? Where can I begin? What a yoke of necessity I have fallen into!" (442–3). This is not the action of a free and powerful leader. As in the prologue, Agamemnon reverses the familiar contrast between humble and mighty to make the point that those who seem to exercise power and control do not:

> Humble birth is useful:
>
> it is easy for them to cry or
>
> say anything, but everything is destitute
>
> for a man of noble birth. The weight of office
>
> stands over us and we are slaves to the mob.
>
> (446–50)

His lack of freedom is brought home most clearly by the contrast with Menelaus. Seeing his brother's tears, Menelaus abruptly reverses himself, regretting his interference and telling Agamemnon to disband the army rather than kill his daughter. But it is too late. Now that his daughter is here, Calchas, Odysseus, and the men of the army will demand her sacrifice. Menelaus may wish things were different, but Agamemnon as leader knows that he has no choice.

Euripides thus shows, like Antiphon in the second *Tetralogy*, that a critical decision is in fact the site of many intersecting motives and choices and also, like Antiphon in *On Concord*, that it comprises a multitude of small, ordinary actions and obligations. Furthermore, the dramatist uses two kinds of irony to underscore the counterintuitive nature of this view. First, there is a paradox of power. Although greater power would seem to involve greater power to act (limited only by the need to avoid the *hybris* of a Xerxes or the blindness of an Oedipus), Euripides shows the king's lack of freedom, hemmed in as he is by duties and obligations to his wife, to the priest Calchas, to the soldiers of the army, and to those, like Odysseus, who feed upon the army's power. The greater one's power, the greater the constraints on one's agency.

Second, there is a complementary paradox in Iphigenia's decision to die for the sake of the expedition. At the culmination of the plot, when Clytemnestra's threats and entreaties on behalf of her daughter have failed, when Achilles has found that all the army is against him and that his noble decision to protect his "bride" Iphigenia is doomed—at this point the young woman enters and announces a startling change of heart. She chooses, entirely of her own free will, to sacrifice her life for the army, and in so doing assumes responsibility not just for the sailing of the fleet but also for the liberty of the entire Hellenic world (1375–84). This is the critical moment writ large—very large. Yet her gesture comes at a point where it is clear that there is nothing free or noble about the sacrifice of Iphigenia, that it is messy, painful, and hopelessly convoluted. The young woman's splendid speech redeems the oppressive atmosphere of the play but does not countermand our new understanding of human agency and responsibility.

In all these cases we find Euripides actively engaged in the intellectual and creative currents of his day. Especially in *Iphigenia at Aulis* he uses dramatic form to his advantage, allowing the sometimes wavering, sometimes unexpected interventions of individuals and groups to portray the limitations of human agency more clearly and more powerfully than was possible in the opposing speeches of Antiphon's *Tetralogy*. But we are also dealing with much more than form. Euripides' plays regularly address contemporary issues, from the role of reading and

writing in a citizen's education to the nature and origins of human culture, and regularly present them to the Athenian audience in a whole new light.

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CHAPTER 30
Myth

Matthew Wright

One of the best sources of information about how Euripides was viewed in his own times is Aristophanes' comedy *Frogs*, first produced in 405 BCE shortly after the tragedian's death. The main characters of *Frogs* include caricatured versions of Euripides and Aeschylus, and in one famous scene Aeschylus is made to complain that Euripides has corrupted his audiences by presenting them with shameless female characters such as Phaedra and Stheneboea. Euripides objects, saying: "But I didn't just invent that myth [*logos*] about Phaedra, did I?—it already existed." Aeschylus replies: "Yes, of course the story already existed: but it is a poet's duty to conceal wickedness and not bring it on stage or teach it." This whole exchange (*Frogs* 1049–55) is based on the view, common throughout antiquity, that poets are teachers—which implies that they ought to choose edifying subjectmatter for their plays. Of course, Aristophanes is having fun here, by highlighting and exaggerating popular stereotypes, but beneath the fun lies a serious point about the use of myth in tragic poetry. It is clear that the subjectmatter of tragedy was not supposed to be invented by the poets, but rather taken from a preexisting tradition. And yet, at the same time, individual poets were perceived as exercising a degree of creativity and originality, as well as investing their particular choice of myth with moral significance. The tragedians used their shared repertoire of inherited material in rather different ways, and their presentation of myth is interesting precisely because of the tensions which one can observe between tradition and innovation.

1 Tradition, Innovation, and Multiplicity

What do we mean when we talk of "myth" in this context? In modern thought "myth" is a complex phenomenon which can be defined, or interpreted, in numerous different ways (see, for instance, Csapo (2005); Dowden (1992); Graf (1993)). The Greeks themselves did not have a systematic way of referring to myths as a special category of discourse: the words *logos* and *mythos*, which we often translate as "myth," can denote any sort of story, tale, account, or narrative. But one helpful definition from an anthropological viewpoint tells us that myths (in general) are "prose narratives which, in the society in which they are told, are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past" (Bascon (1965) 4). A more precise definition of *Greek* myths (in particular) might add that myths are essentially authorless, existing independently of specific texts or genres; they relate specifically to Greek society and culture, and often possess strong local or regional significance; they characteristically contain significant information about the place of humans in the world or the relationship between humans and gods. Greek myths include realistic narratives and details of a type which come close to being "historical," but they also include material of a fabulous or magical nature, in which it is hard to believe that people of Euripides' time literally believed.

Of course, the whole question of "belief" in myth is a problematic one, which is somewhat beyond our scope here (see Veyne (1988), Buxton (1994)). In some sense, however, the Greeks obviously accepted myths as being true—or (at any rate) treated them as a source of authoritative knowledge, of a type that might inform their social, political, religious, or philosophical views.

A crucial feature of Greek myth which may be difficult for someone in the modern world to grasp is the absence of a single basic or normative version of any of the myths. In fact most myths existed in numerous versions, conflicting or differing from one another in small or large details, often reflecting different local traditions or the unsystematic agglomerations of countless retellings over the course of many years. We have to think in terms of a heterogeneous collection of influences from a preliterate phase of early Greek history—and that is before we have even begun to ask what counts as "Greek" history or culture. In the pre classical and prehistoric periods we are really looking at a much wider canvas, including the ancient Near East and Egypt as well as the central Mediterranean world. The modern reader who consults a reference work such as *The Penguin Dictionary of Classical Mythology* or Robert Graves' *Greek Myths* could be forgiven for assuming that each of the neatandtidy narratives presented there reflects "*the* myth" in the form in which it would have been familiar to everyone in the Greek world. But there was never a single, "authorized" version. A traditional story might effectively gain in authority by being told more often than another story, and some authors, such as Homer, Hesiod, or the tragedians, were more influential than others —Euripides himself became an important source for writers of mythological handbooks in later antiquity, including Apollodorus, Hyginus, and Dicaearchus (the compiler of "Tales from Euripides")—but any myth might be changed or tweaked by an individual or group to suit the story that they wanted to tell.

It is almost impossible to know how much detail in any given version of a myth was actually invented afresh by the poet in question. It is often asserted that Euripides characteristically makes up a good deal of his material, and certainly there are numerous characters and events in his plays that are not found in any other previous literary account—one thinks of (for example) the Egyptian royal family in *Helen*, Heracles' selfsacrificing daughter Macaria in *Children of Heracles*, the fact that Ion is made to be the son of Apollo in *Ion*, Hecuba's bizarre metamorphosis into a dog in *Hecuba*, and the entire plot of *Orestes*. The mythical aetiologies at the end of several plays, in which Euripides uses myths to explain or justify some feature of contemporary political or religious life, have often been found especially incredible, to the extent that they or the cults to which they refer have been thought to be partially or wholly invented (see Scullion (2000), who cites the aetiologies from *Andromache, Suppliant Women, Medea, Hippolytus*, and others). But caution is called for: the loss of nearly all Greek literature and drama of the classical and archaic periods makes it hard to be certain about the extent of the mythical innovation. It may well be that any supposedly invented details were taken from earlier versions which are now lost; and even when we strongly suspect Euripides of invention, it is often hard to think of a precise reason or purpose behind it.

Certain ancient writers tend to give a slightly misleading or exaggerated impression of the rigidity of myth. Aristophanes in *Frogs*, for example, might be taken as implying that tragedians

simply inherit their material and have no responsibility whatsoever for their material or the uses to which it is put. But his "Euripides" (quoted above) is being disingenuous, in an attempt to defend himself against charges of immorality; and in any case this is a caricature in a comedy, not the real Euripides speaking. All the same, a character in another Greek comedy makes a similar claim, saying that tragedians have it easy compared with comedians, since they inherit their plots readymade and never have to undergo the hard slog of inventing material—all they have to do is remind their audience of what they already know (from fragment 189 of Antiphanes' lost play *Poetry*). There is a grain of truth in the claim, perhaps, but these are the words of a comedian who wants to persuade us, with his tongue firmly in his cheek, that his own work is infinitely preferable to any tragedy. A rather less humorous writer is Aristotle, who in his *Poetics* (1453b5–6, 22–6, etc.) states that tragedians are invariably bound by the traditional stories that they inherit from the mythical tradition. Even if true, this still leaves a lot of room for manoeuvre; but in any case, Aristotle contradicts himself by mentioning a "delightful" tragedy by Agathon in which the entire plot and all the characters were freely invented (1451b21). None of this evidence, then, should blind us to the fact that tragedians, like other poets, did have a considerable amount of latitude to play around with their material—even if they did not make up stories as such, they could select liberally from the wide variety of material that existed.

The myth of Clytemnestra and her son Orestes, mentioned by Aristotle, is a case in point. "One cannot alter the myths: one cannot have a tragedy in which Clytemnestra is *not* murdered by Orestes," says Aristotle (*Poetics* 1453b22–4). Quite so; but numerous details of that myth were fluid or ambiguous. Why did Clytemnestra need to be killed? Where and when did the murder take place? Did Orestes kill Clytemnestra's lover Aegisthus at the same time? Was Orestes assisted in the killing (by his friend Pylades, or by one or more of his sisters)? What was Apollo's precise role in the killing? What happened to Orestes immediately after the killing, and what was his eventual fate? These and numerous other details of the myth differ hugely in the literary accounts (including Aeschylus' *Oresteia* trilogy, Sophocles' *Electra*, Euripides' *Electra* and *Orestes*, Stesichorus' *Oresteia*, and Pindar's eleventh *Pythian Ode*).

The comedian Antiphanes cites the example of Oedipus as another myth which was universally well known by the audiences of tragedy. "If the poet merely mentions the name 'Oedipus', they know everything else: that his father was Laius, his mother Jocasta; who his sons and daughters were; what will happen to him; what he has done in the past" (fr. 189. 3–8). But was this literally true? Even a story so famous as the Oedipus myth might be told in different ways. In Homer, for example, Oedipus' mother was not Jocasta but Epicaste. The principal narrative which has survived into the modern age, and so gained currency as the "orthodox" version, is Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, in which Oedipus' selfblinding and Jocasta's suicide are central motifs. Nevertheless, Euripides also wrote plays on the same subject, in which these memorable, apparently central events appear very differently. In Euripides' *Oedipus* (fr. 541) the hero does not blind himself, but is forcibly blinded by palace servants; while in his *Phoenician Women*, Jocasta lives on after the realization that Oedipus is her son, and plays a part in the subsequent history of the troubled family. Another feature of the myth which Euripides treats in an unexpected way in *Phoenician Women* is his characterization of

Oedipus' children, particularly the warring brothers Eteocles and Polynices. Here, in complete contrast to Sophocles' *Antigone* and other surviving accounts, Eteocles is the one who usurps the tyranny of Thebes and sends his brother off into exile. These and other divergences from the familiar (Sophoclean) version of the myth can seem very striking to us, and they have important consequences for our interpretation of the principal characters—indeed, the history of modern psychoanalysis would look rather different if Freud had encountered the Euripidean rather than the Sophoclean Oedipus—but it would be wrong to conclude that Euripides' version was perceived within antiquity as being provocative or heterodox. It may be that Euripides was responding to the popularity of Sophocles' treatment (though we do not know whose *Oedipus* was written first), or that he did go out of his way to alter details or select lesserknown variants; but it is equally possible that Sophocles' version was the more unusual one.

All that we can say for certain is that multiple versions of these myths—even the most familiar ones—existed side by side in the fifth century. While the basic outlines remained the same, the details were subject to alteration. Even comparatively small, seemingly incidental changes can have a big effect on our intellectual or emotional response to the characters and their actions. We have to keep in mind the fact that the tragedians would always have felt obliged to entertain their audiences, by giving them new perspectives on these old stories that they had heard many times before. But entertainment was not the sole aim of the tragedians: their presentation of myth was also determined by their intellectual preoccupations. The use of myth to explore wider philosophical and religious issues is (as we shall see) a particular characteristic of Euripidean tragedy.

2 The Selection and Deployment of Myths

Myths provided the subjectmatter for almost all early Greek poets, but tragic poets tended to choose certain types of myth more than others. Myths about familial conflict, incest, suffering, violent death, or war are particularly characteristic of the genre, as are myths which dramatize tensions between the human and divine world. Despite Aristotle's wellknown statement that tragedy depicts "people like us," tragic myths almost always centre on aristocrats or tyrants rather than ordinary people—a fact that may have farreaching consequences for the socio political interpretation of tragedy (see, for example, Seaford (1994), Carter (2007)). Although tragedies were performed in the Theater of Dionysus in Athens, few tragedies seem to have been based on Dionysiac myths—Euripides' late masterpiece *The Bacchae* is a notable exception. In general, myths set in Athens seem to have been significantly less common than those originating in other Greek communities (Argos, Thebes, and Troy seem to have been particularly frequent settings), though Euripides' *Suppliant Women*, set at Eleusis, is markedly Athenocentric in theme and content, and his lost works include an *Aegeus*, an *Erechtheus*, and a *Theseus*.

It cannot be said, on the basis of the remains of Greek tragedy, that Euripides' choice of myths differed significantly from the type of myth dramatized by other tragedians. Writers of Greek comedy in the fourth century and later, who used Euripidean tragedy as a model for their own

plots, sometimes give the impression that Euripides was preoccupied with myths involving rapes, supposititious children, and elaborate recognitionscenes (as in *Ion*, *Auge*, *Danae*, and other tragedies). As Satyrus wrote in his *Life of Euripides* (probably in the third century BCE), "these things form the subjectmatter of New Comedy, and Euripides brought them to perfection" (*Vit. Eur.* fr. 39 VII). However, despite the importance of Euripides for understanding Middle and New Comedy (see Knox (1979), Gutzwiller (2000)), the other tragedians also included myths of rape and recognition: they are not unique to Euripides, and they account for only a small proportion of his plays' plots. In fact it is difficult to identify a characteristically Euripidean *type* of myth, but—as Aristophanes indicates—he was particularly noted for plays centring on notorious or powerful female characters (not only Phaedra and Stheneboea but also Medea, Andromache, Hypsipyle, Helen, Melanippe, and various others). This is clear from several jokes in *Frogs* and the whole plot of *Women at the Thesmophoria*, in which the women conspire to murder Euripides because of the "offensive" way he portrays them in his tragedies! In addition, Euripides does seem to have had a particular interest in exploring mythical traditions which incorporated more than usually confused or contradictory versions of the same story (for example, the myths of Helen and Iphigenia).

A useful impression of how different tragedians might dramatize the same myth is given by Dio of Prusa, a writer and rhetorician of the first century AD, who (in *Oration* 52) explicitly compares and contrasts the treatments of the myth of Philoctetes by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Philoctetes was the Greek hero who was marooned on the island of Lemnos, stricken by a painful disease: all three tragedies concern the attempts of Odysseus to deprive Philoctetes of his magical bow, without which they could not hope to capture Troy. From Dio's discussion we learn that while the story remained essentially the same, each tragedian differed significantly in the choice of specific details. In Aeschylus' version (unlike Homer's), Odysseus did not approach in disguise, and his character was admirable, not cunning or malevolent as in other versions. Aeschylus' Chorus did not apologize for their neglect of Philoctetes, but were instead treated to a lengthy narrative by Philoctetes of his past history and his desertion by the Achaeans, as if they were meeting him for the first time. In Sophocles' version (the only one which survives today), Odysseus has a companion, Neoptolemus, with him when he arrives at Lemnos: this detail ties in with the oracle ordaining that Neoptolemus should have a part in the capture of Troy using Philoctetes' bow. Indeed, the relationship between Odysseus and Neoptolemus is central to Sophocles' play. Another unusual aspect of Sophocles' treatment is that the Chorus is made up not of Lemnians (as in Aeschylus and Euripides) but of sailors from Odysseus' ship.

In general, Euripides' plot is said to have been more complicated than the other versions. It is also described as more rational or realistic in approach, in that the Chorus went out of their way to explain why they had not spoken to Philoctetes or tried to help him during his tenyear solitude on the island: Dio sees this as demonstrating Euripides' "sophisticated" approach to myth, explaining irrational or improbable elements for the benefit of his audience. Euripides also included a companion for Odysseus, but this was Diomedes, not Neoptolemus (as in Sophocles' version); and he invented a further minor character, an inhabitant of the Lemnian

wilderness. These extra characters not only exemplify Euripides' innovative approach to myth and his inventiveness in filling in the "gaps" in the tradition, but they also fit in with what we know of Euripides' penchant for including ordinary, everyday characters and situations (an aspect for which he is criticized in Aristophanes' *Frogs*). Another distinctive detail of Euripides' version seems to have been his presentation of the character of Odysseus, who arrived at Lemnos in disguise and tricked Philoctetes, using deceptive rhetoric to sway him as well as inventing the story of a false embassy.

Dio's summary reflects a number of important aspects of Euripidean tragedy which are frequently highlighted in the ancient and modern critical reception: the visible influence of sophistic thought and rhetoric on Euripides, his alteration of incidental details, his inclusion of everyday or "low" elements, his preference for complicated or busy plotstructures, his concern with verisimilitude, and his implicit rejection of those features of myth which might strike us as unconvincing or irrational. It is a tremendous shame that Euripides' *Philoctetes* (along with that of Aeschylus) is now lost, but it is clear that many of the features noted by Dio can be seen in the plays that do survive.

We are no longer in a position to look at these three Philoctetes plays side by side, but we can still undertake a similar comparison between several tragedians' treatments of the myth of Orestes and Electra. Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*, Sophocles' *Electra*, and Euripides' *Electra* all dramatize the same part of the story of Orestes—his killing of his mother Clytemnestra and her lover Aegisthus, aided and abetted by his sister Electra. In Euripides' version (which is probably, but not certainly, the latest of the three) there are certain striking changes—notably, the fact that at the beginning of the play Electra turns out to have left the Argive royal house: she is married to a poor farmer and is living like a peasant in his hut. This detail, not found anywhere else, makes Euripides' play very different in character from Aeschylus' and Sophocles' tragedies, and the squalid domestic scene seems designed to bring the action of the myth down to earth in a way that had not been attempted before. Other divergences from the Aeschylean and Sophoclean versions include the characterization of the murderous siblings and their mother. Clytemnestra is much more subdued and selfcritical—even sympathetic—than in the other tragedies, while Orestes and Electra by contrast seem coldhearted and dishonourable. The fact that all the characters apart from Clytemnestra appeared in rags is significant in more ways than one: as many have remarked, the shabby setting and dress seems to reflect the characters' shabby morality (with the exception of the farmer, who, paradoxically, is presented as a noble and admirable man). Electra pretends to be pregnant with the farmer's child in order to lure Clytemnestra to her death: a twist which makes Electra seem cruel and callous, but it also reminds us, more poignantly, that she is actually childless and isolated. Euripides' Electra also plays a rather more active role than usual in the murder: she does not simply encourage Orestes from somewhere in the background, as in Aeschylus and Sophocles, but actually joins her brother in striking the fatal blow ("I held the sword with you and accomplished the most awful of sufferings," *Electra* 1224–5).

All these and various other discrepancies between Euripides and the other two tragedians highlight, once again, the fluid and heterogeneous nature of the mythical tradition. Euripides' selection and deployment of details from a wide choice of possibilities is what makes his own

treatment distinctive. And yet there is another difference between his *Electra* and Aeschylus' treatment of the myth in *Libation Bearers* which suggests that there is something more at stake than a striving for novelty or variety alone. In the famous recognition scene (*Electra* 518–44), in which Orestes and Electra finally come face to face after years of separation, the old Servant suggests a series of signs by which Electra might be able to detect her brother's presence in Argos. These signs—a lock of hair, a footprint, and a woven garment—are exactly the same as the recognition tokens used by Aeschylus in the corresponding scene from *LibationBearers* (164–245). Nevertheless, Electra ridicules the Servant's suggestions, saying that they are "unworthy of a clever person" (524). It seems obvious that Euripides' attitude to this material is implicitly critical or ironic in some sense—that is, he is drawing the audience's attention to an inherent clumsiness, implausibility, or lack of verisimilitude in these recognition tokens—but what precisely is being criticized? Is Euripides criticizing Aeschylus' play in particular, or is he criticizing the mythical tradition in general? Scholars have argued about this matter for many years (see Davies (1998)). It is hard to answer the question because we do not really know whether the precise details of the recognition scene, and the tokens, were handed down as an integral component of the myth or whether they were specifically Aeschylean touches. The fact that Aeschylus' *Oresteia* trilogy apparently gained "classic" status even as early as the fifth century, coupled with the fact that Euripides does demonstrably engage in intertextual games with Aeschylus in his *Orestes* and *Iphigenia among the Taurians* (see Zeitlin (1980)), makes it seem probable that Euripides had at least one eye on Aeschylus when writing the *Electra* scene, but it does not altogether solve the problem.

3 "Skepticism" and "Heterodoxy" in Context

A "critical" or "skeptical" attitude to the traditional narratives has often been detected, in one form or another, in Euripidean drama. Indeed, Euripides has traditionally acquired a certain reputation for mythical heterodoxy. German and English scholarship of the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries, in particular, created an influential and peculiarly tenacious image of Euripides as a radical iconoclast who rejected traditional myths in favor of a very modern seeming, aggressively atheistic rationalism (see Verrall (1895), Nestle (1901), Dodds (1929); see also Dunn in this volume on Euripides and intellectual trends). Karl Reinhardt saw Euripides' outlook as symptomatic of an intellectual or spiritual crisis: "in the place of the heroic came the rational struggle against pain and fear, in the place of the ancient cults and myths came the philosophical god of the world · · · the old gods dwindled · · · and thus peace between intellect and tradition was concluded once and for all" (Reinhardt (1960) 21–2). In support of this view, Reinhardt cites several striking passages from Euripides' plays, including the scene from *Electra* mentioned above but also (to choose just a few examples):

> The "wise" gods—as they are called—are no less deceptive than winged dreams. There is much confusion among the gods and among mortals. The man who is sensible and trusts in the words of prophets is destroyed, just as does the man who trusts in wise men · · ·
>
> (*Iphigenia among the Taurians* 570–5)

> Well, I do not believe in the story of Tantalus' banquet for the gods, that they ate his son with relish · · ·
>
> (*Iphigenia among the Taurians* 386–8)
>
> I have never believed—and I never will believe—that the gods pursue illicit loveaffairs, or that they bind each other's hands, or that one god can be master of another. A god, if he is truly a god, is not found wanting in any respect: these are just poets' miserable stories [*logoi*] · · ·
>
> (*Heracles* 1341–6)

One could quote numerous other comparable sentiments from other Euripidean plays. Taken out of context, such lines may well give the impression that Euripides' attitude to myth and religion was eccentric or unorthodox.

On the other hand, it is possible to take a different view. More recently scholars have come to acknowledge that Euripides' reputation as an unusually problematic or heterodox thinker is largely undeserved. It is based on a series of misconceptions—an anachronistic view of Euripides as a sort of protomodernist figure, an exaggerated notion of the supposed "orthodoxy" of Greek myths generally, and a tendency to give uncontextualized accounts of Euripides' art which fail to take into account his contemporary literary and intellectual background and influences.

It is hard to deny that Euripides' attitude to myths (in general or in particular) often comes across as skeptical or questioning, but such an attitude would not have marked him out in his own times as being particularly unusual or forwardlooking. In fact Greek poets from the very earliest times had been questioning the veracity of myths and explicitly rejecting the stories told by other poets. The sixthcentury lyric poet Stesichorus, for instance, wrote a poem called the *Palinode* in which he contested the Homeric version of the myth of Helen of Troy, saying outright: "That myth [*logos*] is not true: you did not embark on the wellbenched ships, and you did not reach the citadel of Troy · · ·" (fr. 192). Pindar, writing commemorative odes for Olympian victors several decades later, adopts a similarly bold stance when narrating the myth of Pelops: "Son of Tantalus, in my account of you I shall contradict those poets who have gone before me · · ·" (*Olympian* 1.37). The poet Solon's observation that "poets tell many lies" (fr. 29) was quoted so often in antiquity that it became a proverbial maxim in its own right. Even when poets were not actually rejecting other people's accounts in so many words, they might highlight the provisional, narrated status of their own subjectmatter—as when Alcaeus narrates the myth of Helen: "Priam and his sons found yours a bitter marriagebond, Helen, so the story [*logos*] goes · · ·" (fr. 42). Here Alcaeus is openly acknowledging the mythical status of Helen's story and the fact that his own retelling of the story is just one among many accounts. All of this selfconscious posturing may perhaps be seen as a fundamental questioning of the mythical tradition, but it is more commonly interpreted as a strategy of competitive poetics. Each poet is endeavoring to convince their audience that their particular version of the myth is better—more authentic, more authoritative, more relevant to the social life of the community—than other, rival versions (see Griffith (1990), Graziosi (2002)). However we interpret it, this is clearly a traditional strand of early Greek poetics:

Euripides' employment of the same type of rhetorical strategy that all the other poets had long been using does not make him an extraordinary or avantgarde figure.

A certain skepticism towards myth, or criticism of specific poetic treatments of myth, is also seen in the early Greek philosophical tradition. The lines from *Heracles* (1341–6, quoted above) in which traditional accounts of divine morality are rejected, correspond very closely to Xenophanes' criticisms of poets on the grounds that they taught everyone that the gods were anthropomorphic and immoral: "Homer and Hesiod have attributed to the gods everything that is shameful and a reproach: theft, adultery and deception of one another" (fr. 11; cf. 12–14). Even those Euripidean passages which seem to doubt or deny the existence of gods (e.g. *Bellerophon* fr. 286), or to reduce the gods to figments of the human imagination (e.g. *Trojan Women* 969–990; *Electra* 743–4; cf. *Sisyphus* fr. 1, which may be by Euripides or Critias), find parallels in Presocratic or sophistic thought. Xenophanes, for instance, wrote that no man ever lived who could know anything for certain about the gods, nor would anybody recognize the truth even if he happened to speak it by chance (fr. 34); while Democritus suggested that humans' conception of the gods was a result of their fear of natural phenomena such as thunder, lightning, and earthquakes (test. 75); and Protagoras famously said: "Concerning the gods, I am unable to say whether they exist or not, for there are many impediments to knowledge—the absurdity of the question and the brevity of human life" (fr. 4; cf. fr. 1). It seems that Greek religion had always been able to accommodate a healthy amount of speculation and skepticism. When the Chorus in Euripides' *Helen* sing "What is a god, or what is not a god, or what is in between? · · · I do not know what true or reliable story I can find among mortals" (*Helen* 1137–8), their words would probably not have struck the original audience as shocking or out of the ordinary. Rather, these lines (along with many others) are best seen as a contribution to a lively, preexisting open debate about the nature and knowability of divine myth.

4 What Makes Euripides' Myths Distinctive?

So far, then, I have been stressing the traditional and conventional character of Euripides' use of myth, partly as a corrective to the numerous accounts that present him as problematic or odd. Nevertheless, it remains possible to identify several ways in which Euripides' attitude to myths is distinctive. We have already mentioned Dio of Prusa's view of Euripides as a poet who was concerned to expose implausibility in myths and to present his audience with a convincing level of everyday detail: perhaps it could be said that Euripides came closer than Aeschylus or Sophocles to what we would call "realism" in drama. We have also mentioned Euripides' penchant for exploiting the gaps in the tradition, filling in the "missing" details which no one else mentions, or extending the narrative beyond the point at which the inherited stories run out. What actually happened between the fall of Troy and the capture and enslavement of the Trojan women? Where exactly did Orestes go when he went into exile, and what precise form did his madness take? What was married life like for Menelaus and Helen after he had reclaimed her? What was going through Pasiphae's head when she had sexual intercourse with a bull? What did Perseus actually say to Andromeda when they met?· · · Euripides seems to have had a particular interest in supplying answers to this sort of question.

He also seems (as far as we can tell) to have enjoyed combining different traditions into a single story—as in his *Helen*, where he mangles together the Odyssean myth of Helen's visit to Egypt with the completely separate tradition of the phantom Helen; or in his *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, where he combines several disparate versions of the Iphigenia myth (her sacrifice, her miraculous substitution, her role as priestess of Artemis, her travels in the Black Sea region, and so on); or in his *Alcestis*, where there is a collision between the primitive legends and chthonic gods of Thessalian myth and the heroic exploits of Heracles; or in his *Andromache*, where he mixes together two separate strands of the myth of Neoptolemus, bringing both his wife (Hermione) and his concubine (Andromache) on stage: the two jealous women confront one another in Neoptolemus' absence, and he never even appears (alive) on the scene, though his arrival is constantly anticipated (see Mossman (1996)). These and other mythical amalgams make for lively and complicated dramatic plots.

Another way in which Euripides can be seen as exploiting the ambiguities and inconsistencies of the tradition is by contradicting his own earlier treatments of myths, or inserting unusual crossreferences between one play and another. In this respect one particularly calls to mind his varying portrayals of Helen, a famously elusive figure in terms of her motivation and ethical coloring, who seems to be an almost completely different person in each of his plays where she appears. In *Trojan Women* she is a petulant, selfish woman, driven by her "insatiable, luxurious appetites" (996–7), concerned mainly with her appearance and her own discomfort while the other women around her suffer agonies, and unwilling to take the blame for events at Troy—the original scarlet woman, perhaps, whom Aeschylus described as "hell to ships, hell to men, hell to cities" (*Agamemnon* 689–90). In *Helen*, in complete contrast, she appears as a gentle, sexually chaste, remorseful figure,who is shown to have been completely innocent and faithful to her husband Menelaus all along (for it was a phantom Helen, apparently, that Paris abducted). This Helen sees her famed beauty as a curse, and deliberately shears off her long hair and dresses in drab black clothing: she is thus different not only in character but also in appearance from the traditional Helen of myth. Aristophanes was so impressed by this treatment that in his comedy *Women at the Thesmophoria*, produced the year after *Helen*, he parodied "the new Helen" (850) at some length. But a few years later, the Helen who appears in Euripides' *Orestes* is once again a wicked adulteress. No mention is made of the phantom, and Helen is still obsessed by her appearance, refusing to cut off a lock of her hair as a graveoffering. "She is the same old Helen," says Electra (*Or.* 129)—a description which signals a degree of selfconscious commentary on Euripides' part, as well as an acknowledgement of Aristophanes' parody. But which of these versions represents the real Helen? Euripides has made it impossible for us to decide.

Sometimes a play might refer, provocatively, to an arcane or unexpected version of the myth which will be revisited in more detail in a later play—as in the case of the myth of the phantom Helen. When Euripides refers to this story very briefly and in parenthesis at the end of *Electra* (1280–3), he is usually seen as whetting the audience's appetite for his play *Helen*, which is therefore likely to have been produced at the next festival following *Electra*'s performance. But just as often there is a lack of continuity or consistency from play to play. The play *Orestes* in several respects explicitly contradicts events in *Andromache* ("a play whose plot we are

told retroactively will not take place": Zeitlin (1980) 71), most strikingly in the concluding aetiology when we are told that Neoptolemus will die before he has the chance to marry Hermione—Orestes will marry her instead (*Or.* 1652–7). Similarly, the ending of *Iphigenia at Aulis* negates the whole plot of the earlier *Iphigenia among the Taurians*—a situation which may account, in part, for the confused state of the text of the later play.

The feature that marks out Euripides above all, perhaps, is the degree of selfconsciousness with which he repeatedly draws the audience's attention to the narrative choices he has made or to the unstable nature of the mythical tradition. Even though Euripides never inserts any explicit authorial comments, he is an undeniable implicit presence within the text: his persona seems to intrude into the world of the plays more obviously than in any work by Aeschylus or Sophocles. Thus, in a sense, Euripides is looking back to the sort of selfawareness, or self advertisement, that characterized earlier lyric poetry but seems largely to have disappeared from fifthcentury poetry (with the exception of comedy). But whereas writers such as Pindar and Stesichorus were concerned to convey the impression that their own treatments were more authoritative than those of their rivals, Euripides by contrast seems to be undermining the whole notion of mythical authority, preferring to stress the provisional, multiple, and unverifiable status of mythical narratives.

Examples of implicit authorial comment include those passages where the poet makes his characters identify particular aspects of their own narrative as "new" or "novel" (*kainos*). For instance, in the prologue of *Heracles* (38) Amphitryon's reference to the usurper Lycus, the "new" ruler of Thebes, underlines Euripides' departure from previous versions of the myth and the fact that the character Lycus is either invented or taken from an obscure variant tradition. Similarly, when the Chorus in *Hecuba* (1038) sing about the "novel disasters" that they have just witnessed (Hecuba's blinding of Polymestor and the murder of his sons), they seem to be drawing our attention to the fact that Polymestor is an unfamiliar or altogether new character in the story. Helen's remark to Menelaus, that there is "a certain lack of originality" in his ruse to escape from Egypt (*Helen* 1056), probably constitutes a similarly selfconscious comment on the author's selection of material. The play *Orestes* contains an especially large number of pointed references to "novelty" (234, 239, 790, 977–8, 1503, etc.), reflecting the fact that its entire plot is seemingly invented. When the Messenger asks "What's new in Argos?" (875) the irony is piquant: nearly *everything* is new, and Euripides is deliberately making us aware of this fact.

There are also numerous points at which the characters seem uncannily aware of the fact that they are characters in a myth, rather than people from real life. Often a strong sense is given that their stories and past experiences are already universally well known as myths, even within the world of the plays. "Who is there alive today who does not know of Argive Amphitryon, who shared Alcmene's bed with Zeus?" asks Amphitryon in the opening lines of *Heracles* (1–3). His words primarily refer to the audience's knowledge of the well established myth of Heracles and his family: this bold opening device shows that the characters themselves see themselves as part of the world of myth, and it reminds us that we inevitably evaluate the Heracles of the play (for right or wrong) in the light of our knowledge of the tradition. Several other Euripidean characters refer to their own fame—such as

Menelaus, who says that he is "famous the whole world over" (*Hel.* 504), or Iphigenia, who describes the scene of her own sacrifice at Aulis as "famous" (*IT* 9), or Electra, who calls her father Agamemon "the famous man—if indeed he *is* famous" and refers to the murder of Clytemnestra as "an act not glorious in the eyes of everybody" (*Or.* 17, 30). An incongruous sense of unreality is created by these anachronistic details, and it is hard to account for the strange tone of irony or detachment that arises from such passages. Since Euripides in a sense seems to be "breaking the illusion," this has sometimes been discussed as a variety of metatheatricality (e.g. Dobrov (2001), Zeitlin (1980)). But in fact Euripides is not drawing attention to the play's theatricality; nor is he (as elsewhere) implicitly criticizing a particular poetic narrative by someone else. Rather, he is drawing attention specifically to the myths themselves, and to the complexities and difficulties inherent in the mythical tradition: so we should perhaps call such moments "metamythological" if we want to apply a label to them (cf. Wright (2005)).

Euripides included a large amount of "metamythological" material in his later plays, particularly in the *Helen*, *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, and *Orestes*. One of the reasons for this seems to be that towards the end of his life he became increasingly interested in the epistemological and ontological theories of Gorgias, Protagoras, and other members of the sophistic movement (see Kerferd (1981), Conacher (1998)). As we have already seen, early Greek philosophers had long demonstrated skepticism towards individual myths or poetic accounts; but the sophists went a step further, radically questioning the nature of knowledge and the extent to which either human senseperception or language could provide an adequate reflection of reality. Euripides' attitude to myths in these late plays reflects a broader philosophical concern with knowledge and truth. The whole plot of *Helen*, with its two identical Helens (the real one and the phantom), is perhaps ideally suited to explore epistemological and ontological problems. Do appearances reflect reality? How do we know which Helen is "real"? Can the truth be told using the medium of language? Can we trust the evidence of myth (which is just another form of language)? These are the sorts of questions which Euripides raises in the play. In this context, the wellestablished attitude of skepticism towards myth takes on a new significance. From the beginning of the play, the slippery and unverifiable nature of myths is emphasized at almost every point. Even when Helen narrates her own history and family background, she distances herself from her own account:

> My father is Tyndareus; but *there is a certain story* [*logos*] that Zeus, taking the form of a swan, flew to my mother Leda and lay with her by deception, pretending to be fleeing the pursuit of an eagle—*if that story* [*logos*] *is true* · · ·
>
> (*Hel.* 17–21)

> Achilles once came as a suitor of Helen, *so we hear*· · ·
>
> (*Hel.* 99)

> It is completely unheardof for a woman, either Greek or barbarian, to give birth to a child in a white eggshell, in which *they say* Leda bore me to Zeus · · ·
>
> (*Hel.* 257–9)

This recurrently ironical mode of presentation undermines the authority of myths even more than usual, and as the play progresses, it is made clear in numerous ways that myths are a form of illusion, with only a tenuous and uncertain connection with reality (see Wright (2005) 260–337 for further discussion).

In this brief survey I have tried to give a sense of how Euripides would have been interpreted by his original audience, whose conception of myth, religion, truth, and knowledge was somewhat different from our own. The Athenians who watched and read his plays knew their myths well, but they were also quite aware of their heterogeneous and plural nature. Certainly Euripides has a distinctive approach to myth: he is more selfconscious than any other tragedian in exposing the problems in the inherited tradition and in making his audience think about myth (in general) as a subject of interest in itself. But any distinctive or unusual qualities must be understood in context. Even though Euripides' ironical or detached manner of presentation can sometimes make him appear eccentric, it is thoroughly grounded in the Greek poetic tradition; and even though he can sometimes seem frivolous, his use of myth very often has a serious purpose and intellectual depth. As Cedric Whitman very sensibly puts it, in his fascinating study of Euripidean myth (Whitman (1974) 147): "Ever since his own day it has been common practice to put Euripides into strained religious postures, and make him an apostate from religion and myth. It seems more true to say that he was probing for the meaning of myth, as all his predecessors had done, and finding it in his own way."

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FURTHER READING

Csapo (2005) is an invaluable introduction to theories of myth in general; Dowden (1992) and Graf (1993) provide the beginner with specific material relating to Greek mythology. Mastronarde's monograph on Euripides (2010) contains numerous insights on the manipulation of myth in each tragedy, as do several excellent studies of individual plays (Mossman (1995) on *Hecuba*; Allan (2000) on *Andromache*; Goff (1990) on *Hippolytus*). My own books on the "escapetragedies" *Helen, Iphigenia among the Taurians*, and *Andromeda* (Wright (2005)) and *Orestes* (Wright (2008)) are much concerned with Euripidean myth, including much fuller discussion of "metamythology" and the relationship between myth and philosophy mentioned briefly in this chapter. MacDermott (1991) explores the question of selfconscious novelty in Euripides. Whitman (1974), a provocative and suggestive reading of Euripides in the light of Northrop Frye, is an underrated classic of its type, though his conclusions will not convince everyone. For detailed information about the narrative and iconographic tradition of all Greek myths, see the *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologicae Classicae* (*LIMC*).

CHAPTER 31
Euripides and Religion

Judith Fletcher

The original performance venues for Euripides' dramas, as for all Greek tragedy, were religious festivals sponsored by the citystate of Athens in honor of Dionysus. Tragic productions were expressions of reverence, offerings to a god whose transformative powers, so disturbingly represented in the *Bacchae*, were appropriately celebrated by the theater. These dramatic festivals were only one aspect of a dynamic religious culture in classical Athens, a city famous for its prolific and varied forms of worship. According to Plutarch, Athens experienced a constant stream of festivals, sacrifices, processions, and public funerals (*Pericles* 11.4). The celebrations for Dionysus were important events in the religious life of a polis whose sacred calendar featured at least sixty other events a year. In addition, Euripides' audiences witnessed the building of shrines and temples to old and new gods alike. As audience members sat at the foot of the Acropolis in the sacred space of Dionysus they would see temples of Athena, other gods, and heroes completed or in progress above and around them. These celebrations and edifices were products of Athenian commercial success and military might, and an affirmation of the city's distinctive democratic values. In addition to their public displays of piety, members of the community also engaged in their own forms of private or domestic worship in humble, daily rituals to honor Zeus Ktesios ("Zeus of the Storeroom"), Hestia, and other household gods.

As a form of worship Greek tragedy is selfreferential in its broad ranging depiction of religious activity—a reflection of the active ritual life of its audience—but of the three tragedians Euripides makes the most explicit allusions to specific cults and ceremonies. His characters, although they belong to the mythologized heroic past, perform the same religious practices that men and women of fifth century Greece did. They pray, sing in Choruses, make offerings to the gods, go to festivals, and perform rituals. Actions such as supplication or sacrifice, and religious discourse including prayers, function as conceptual anchors that tether the fictional world of the drama to the lived reality of its audience. Euripidean tragedy is permeated with religion, which not only provides a touch of realism, but also gives meaning and structure to the dramatic action. Ritual acts and language can shape a plot; for example *Suppliant Women* is organized around the supplication by Adrastus and the Argive mothers before the temple of Demeter in its first half, and around funeral rites in the second half. The play ends with Athena's prescription of an oath ceremony at Delphi, and the exodus of Adrastus to perform this ceremony (see McClure in this volume). Euripides' audience had witnessed public funerals and treaty oaths much like these, sometimes in the very same space, the theater of Dionysus.

And yet it is characteristic of Euripides to problematize religion. He is not the only tragedian to do so, but he is the one to do it most often and with the most specificity. *Suppliant Women* opens as the Argive mothers led by Adrastus disrupt the festive rites at Eleusis with their

supplication and lamentation. Later Evadne, overcome with grief for her husband, intrudes into the public funeral with her spectacular suicide. Eventually the women fade into the background, as the play moves to a more public ceremonial conclusion (Foley (2001) 40). Like many Euripidean tragedies, this one progresses from a disturbance of ritual to some kind of resolution.

The youngest of the extant tragedians, and the one closest to our contemporary sensibilities, Euripides is also the poet who embeds the religious conventions of his society most deeply in his drama. Euripides' representation and thematization of religious worship is far too complex to be covered completely in an essay of this length. This survey is a selection of some significant aspects of the topic. Since all three tragedians include a religious dimension in their dramas, we will focus on what makes Euripides exceptional in this respect. The obvious place to begin is with the gods.

1 The Gods

It has often been said, but bears repeating, that the Greek gods are not usually kind or even fair. The gods of tragedy, and especially of Euripides, are often irrationally cruel; it is a dictate of the genre. Euripides is distinctive in how he puts the gods in the foreground, often by having them speak to the audience in a prologue where they might prophesize the action of the play, or put its events in a broader context not understood by the characters (Hamilton (1978) 277–302). Athena and Poseidon appear at the beginning of *Trojan Women* to announce that the gods will abandon Troy, and to inform the audience that Athena resents the Achaean rape of Cassandra in her temple. In the *Bacchae*, Dionysus explains the reason for his visit to Thebes, summarizes the plot and also takes a role as a character in the play. He then appears in the exodus as himself to foretell the future of the remaining characters. There are also offstage events, such as the rape of Creusa by Apollo before the action of *Ion*, or Artemis' substitution of a deer for Iphigenia (*Iphigenia in Tauris* 28–29), and other divine interventions.

When the gods invade the human psyche they are devastating. Aphrodite enflames Phaedra with debilitating lust; Dionysus sends hallucinations to Pentheus; in *Heracles* Hera sends madness to a hero, blameless of any impropriety but at the peak of his success, and drives him to murder his wife and children. Modern critics might understand such psychic intrusions as symbols for psychological states, but an ancient audience would use a different set of conceptual tools to analyze divine interference. A crucial interpretive question here is whether ordinary Athenians understood such vindictive gods to be the same deities that they honored with sacrifice and prayer. Jon Mikalson argues that appearances of the gods in the theater and their interaction with mortals were not part of the normal experience of fifthcentury Athenians who would accordingly recognize them as narrative conventions (Mikalson (1991) 96–8). But while a modern reader might think in such terms, the division between myth and history was not clear cut for an ancient audience. The *Ion* ends with Athena's announcement that Ion, son of Apollo, will be the forefather of the eponymous founders of four Athenian clans. The appearance of the gods in the conclusion *ex machina* is typical of Euripides (it occurs in nine plays) and often links the fictional world with the real by having the god prescribe a cult recognizable to the

audience. Instead of separating the world of fifthcentury Athens from the mythical world of tragedy, the gods actually serve to meld the two realities (Spira (1960) 161; Dunn (1996) 61–62).

2 Impiety and Perjury

Intersections between divine and mortal worlds might have occurred in the heroic past, but the issues at stake were very much those of Euripides' audience. When his gods express offense against impiety, they mirror a concern of fifthcentury Athenians who had passed the decree of Diopeithes (circa 438/7) outlawing anyone who denied the existence of the gods or taught astronomy. This decree, which led to the prosecution of the philosopher Anaxagorus among others for *asebeia*, is reflected in a fragment from an unidentified Euripidean drama: "who seeing this does not think of a god and does not hurl far from him the crooked deceits of the astronomers?" (fr. 913 N).

To judge from what remains of Greek tragedy—and it must be recognized that only a small fraction has survived—Euripides specialized in the consequences of impiety. The figure of Pentheus is notable for his flagrant derision of Dionysus in the *Bacchae*. When the young king is ripped apart by a band of Theban maenads, who include his own mother, it is the will of Dionysus who had opened the play by outlining his program of vengeance. Likewise Aphrodite promises to make Hippolytus pay for saying that she is the worst of the gods (*Hippolytus* 13); the audience subsequently sees him sneering at her cult statue. Aphrodite's satisfaction is secured when the young man becomes the victim of Phaedra's godinduced sexual passion.

The gods, ruthless in their punishment of insults, need not appear before the audience to explain their motives. In *Andromache* the murder of Neoptolemus in Apollo's shrine at Delphi is an extreme consequence of Neoptolemus' anger at the god for his role in the death of Achilles. The nature of the offense is not, like those of Pentheus and Hippolytus, that he refuses to worship the god, but that he has stepped over the line by accosting Apollo. Andromache explains that Neoptolemus seeks to "pay the penalty" for his "mania" (51–5), but the god is merciless. Neoptolemus is murdered at the altar of Apollo as a suppliant. He dies by mortal hands, but the voice of Apollo demanded the killing (Mikalson (1991) 137–9).

Even in his satyr play the theme of impiety shades the comic aspects of the drama. In *Cyclops*, Polyphemus announces that "I do not fear the thunderbolts of Zeus and I do not know in what respect Zeus is a stronger god than I" (320–1). There is no external commentary by a god or character on his hybris, but when Odysseus, after praying to Hephaestus and Sleep (599–607), burns out the Cyclops' eye it seems to be just punishment for this disrespect.

Such acts of divine retribution are more than plot devices, but on the most elementary didactic level they explain the practice of Greek religion, which is to honor and placate the gods because they are powerful. As we have noted, impiety was a very real concern in fifth century Athens. In addition to the prosecutions of the physical philosophers and other individuals, we can adduce reactions to the mutilation of the Herms and desecration of the Eleusinian Mysteries. These events shocked the Athenians and fueled their anxiety about the

expedition to Sicily (Thucydides 6.27–8). In a text attributed to the orator Lysias the speaker denounces Andocides, who had confessed to profaning the Mysteries and was suspected of mutilating the Herms. The speaker opines that the gods did not kill Andocides, but rather saved him for a miserable life in chains, his property diminished, in order to punish him for his *asebeia* (PseudoLysias 6.31). The gods, according to this commentary, would impose penalties through human agents. Although Andocides does not suffer the spectacular punishment of Hippolytus, this analysis of divine retribution is consonant with Euripidean theology.

By bringing the gods forward to articulate concerns with impiety, or even by letting his audience draw its own conclusions about the punishment of characters like Polyphemus, Euripides reveals or suggests an unseen and otherwise unknowable network of divine will and mortal agency. It is no consolation to know that a god can inflict madness, order the death of a supplicant at an altar, or persecute a good wife with inappropriate desires, but it is an explanation. One gives offerings in the hopes that immortals will accept them and return the favor. But mortals must be aware that even the most extravagant gestures of reverence or remorse will not erase a history of offense to the gods. Neoptolemus could do nothing to undo his insult to Apollo. The Chorus of *Trojan Women* remembers its acts of devotion and wonders why Trojan piety has not been reciprocated (1060–80). The audience having seen Athena and Poseidon in the prologue know that the gods have deserted Troy, and also that the Achaeans will be punished for their impiety.

Characters might refuse to worship certain gods, blaspheme them, or even at times question the morality of the gods, but there is little evidence of what we would call atheism, a complete lack of belief in any god, in Greek thought. Impiety, as in the case of Pentheus, involves outright rejection of a god, but introducing new gods without the approval of the demos was also a danger, as the trial of Socrates illustrates (Garland (1992) 145–50). In a constantly evolving polytheism this might seem to be a paradox, but the introduction of any deity or cult had to ratified by the government of Athens (Garland (1992) 19). The crisis of the *Bacchae* stems, in part, from the fact that the state, in the person of Pentheus, refuses to accept the cult of Dionysus, which for the Athenians was an integral part of their polis religion.

Probably because Euripides was so deeply fascinated with the topic of impiety and sacrilege, he became subject to those accusations himself (Lefkowitz (1989) 72). His characters might make impious remarks that are then attributed to their creator or taken out of context. Aristophanes exploits or even creates this prejudice. In *Clouds* a caricature of Socrates teaches that the traditional gods do not exist, and he attempts to replace them with new gods who are elements of nature or meteorological abstractions. It seems that the sacrilegious teachings of Socrates inculcate a taste for Euripides, since one of his pupils beats his father over his resistance to the poet. More obvious implications of impiety are evident in *Women Celebrating the Thesmophoria* when a character complains that Euripides' tragedies have taught that the gods do not exist (450–1). And Euripides, a character in the play, tries to swear an oath to his old relative "by Aether, the dwelling place of Zeus," (a reference to the lost *Melanippe the Wise* [F487]). When the relative protests, Euripides then swears by "all the gods together." The old man admonishes him: "Remember then, that your mind swore, not your

tongue, that wasn't the oath I wanted" (272–76). The reference to Hippolytus (*Hippolytus* 612) who threatened to break his oath of silence to Phaedra's Nurse is taken out of context here and in *Frogs* when Dionysus uses it to explain why he had broken a promise to take Euripides back to the light (1493).

According to Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1416A 28–34) a certain Hygiainon also used the line as a gambit in a civil dispute to accuse Euripides of *asebeia.* But Hygiainon either did not know the play, or tried to exploit his audience's ignorance of it, for despite his threat Hippolytus does keep his oath even though it prevents him from defending himself against Phaedra's accusation of rape. *Euorkia*, or "respect for one's oath," is a signifier of great piety in Euripides. A fragment of *Erechtheus* (F. 370. 70), for example, shows that Athena honors the daughters of the Athenian king for "not abandoning their oaths" to sacrifice themselves in unison with their sister.

Far from condoning perjury, Euripidean drama is singular in representing the devastating consequences of the broken oath. Since one swore an oath by naming a god as witness, to break an oath was a serious sacrilege. Medea repeatedly accuses Jason of breaking his oaths to her. In her final words spoken to him from her dragon chariot containing the corpses of their children she reminds her former lover one last time of his "false oath" (*pseudorkou*, 1392). As astute readers acknowledge she acts as a force of divine retribution by killing their sons (Burnett (1973) 1–24; Kovacs (1993) 45–70). When the Chorus (1260) calls her an Erinys, the audience could recall that it was the function of this spirit to enact vengeance for perjured oaths (e.g. Homer, *Iliad* 19.259–60). The provisional curse of many an oath formula was that the perjurer's family line be exterminated, and this is precisely what happens to Jason. By contrast the audience witnesses the Athenian king Aegeus swearing an oath to provide Medea with sanctuary (746–54). Ironically his piety provides her with an escape so that she can commit the infanticide with impunity.

In *Phoenician Women* the Theban prince Eteocles is also represented as a perjurer. His brother Polyneices claims that Eteocles agreed to hand over the throne on alternating years "giving the names of gods as oath witnesses" (481), but then reneged on his oath. The text gives a complex background to the history of this dispute, but the act of perjury helps to characterize Eteocles as an impious and politically driven despot. As the consequences of these oaths taken in the name of the gods illustrate, Euripides was fascinated with different forms of impiety. Rather than condoning disrespect of the gods, as his critics claimed, he makes his characters suffer terrible penalties for their sacrilegious words and deeds.

3 Ritual

Piety was manifested by keeping one's oath, and also by honoring the gods in prayer, sacrifice, and cult. Euripides is the tragic poet who delineates the rituals of his society in the most detail. Engagement with ritual becomes a marker of social normalcy, while exclusion or distortion indicates a crisis. When Electra rejects the invitation of the the Chorus to attend a festival honoring Hera (*Electra* 167–74), a reference to the Argive Heraia celebrated in Euripides'

own time, she marks her isolation from the social life of her community. The displacement of her sister Iphigenia among the barbaric Taurians is nowhere more poignant than her melancholy lament that she is not singing at this same festival (*Iphigenia in Tauris* 221). The captive Trojan women in *Hecuba* wistfully imagine the impossible— singing at the festivals of Delos, or helping to prepare Athena's robe for the Panathenaia (463–74), celebrations that would be familiar to the audience, and which contrast with the apocalyptic world represented in the theater. These anachronistic references to fifthcentury festivals are one way of bringing the mythological world of tragedy closer to the social experience of Euripides' audience.

As noted above, Euripides likes to end his plays with a god appearing *ex machina* to institute a hero cult or a ritual contemporary with his the audience. The crisis of the play is given meaning as the forerunner to an established religious practice. These divine prescriptions may serve as closure to tragedies that feature some deformation of ritual; new rites replace corrupt ones that shaped the catastrophic events of the drama. Athena's announcement that Orestes will found a ritual at Halai requiring a symbolic drop of blood (*Iphigenia in Tauris* 1458–61) looks forward to a future of healthy cultic activity that replaces the nightmare of human sacrifice from which he has escaped. These *aitia* are not always articulated by a god: Eurystheus, persecutor of Heracles and his family, foretells that he will be buried at the temple of Athena at Pallene, from where he will confer benefits upon Athens (*Heraclid*ae 1026–44), an example of the enemyhero cult phenomenon (Wilkins (1993) xxiv–v). Theseus assures Heracles that Athenians will honor him in shrines and cults after his death (*Heracles* 1331–3).

As one of the first Greek writers to treat these aetiologies, Euripides was a precursor of the seven Atthidographers (active for a century and a half after his death) whose work included the history of Athenian cults. There should be little doubt that Euripides' lost tragedies also displayed his fascination with religious history. With the exclusion of *Alcestis* and *Cyclops*, which are not tragedies, only *Trojan Women* does not look forward to the establishment of a cult or ritual (Garland (1992) 156–8). For example, the end of *Medea* mentions a cult honoring her dead children at Corinth (1378–83); *Helen* features an *aition* of a cult for Helen and the Dioscuri (1667–8). There is controversy about whether Euripides is just inventing these cults and rituals, since in many cases there is no verification for them; often his descriptions conflict with other evidence (e.g. Scullion (2000) 217–33). But many aetiologies would be orally preserved; written or material evidence does not survive to substantiate Euripides' accounts. One might wonder why Euripides would invent or tamper with social practices familiar to most of his audience (Seaford (2009) 223–34). The answer seems to lie in the relationship of the ritual to Euripides' dramatic purposes.

When Thetis appears in the exodus of *Andromache* to foretell a hero cult of Neoptolemus at Delphi, some audience members might have a vague knowledge of his tomb, and only a few would have actually have seen it. Thetis suggests that an inscription on the monument "reports the violent murder of Neoptolemus" (1241–3), but nothing of that inscription is known. Euripides might embellish the truth here to highlight his version of the brutal death of Neoptolemus. Similarly Orestes tells Iphigenia how he was forced to drink his wine at a table by himself when he visited Athens, but now the Athenians "have made a ritual of my misfortune," (*Iphigenia in Tauris* 958–9) a reference to the festival of the Choes at the end of

the Anthesteria. Orestes' account is the only example of this *aition* which accentuates the new account of his experience in Athens. In Aeschylus' *Eumenides* he is exculpated of the matricide, but here some of the Furies have pursued him to Tauris. If this is an aetiological revision, then it highlights adjustments to the canonical Aeschylean version of events (Dunn (1996) 50–51).

Nor is there evidence for the cult with which Artemis rewards the dying Hippolytus for his devotion (*Hippolytus* 1425–30). Young women of Troezen will dedicate their hair and sing hymns in his honor. Although the details fit with evidence for prenuptial hair offerings to Artemis, Euripides might have adapted cultic elements for his theme. The play began with Hippolytus' forceful refusal to offer prayers to Aphrodite; now he is a subject of song as girls pass from puberty and the realm of Artemis into sexual maturity and the realm of Aphrodite. Thus the prescribed cult amalgamates the spheres of the two goddesses that Hippolytus tried to keep separate.

As these examples suggest, Euripides engaged his audience with his fictive world by allusions to familiar ritual practices, but he also modifies those rites to enhance his poetic program. He is not so much interested in exact replication, but rather evokes cultic detail to draw his audience into the drama.

4 Deformed Rituals

As Barbara Goff observes, "to investigate any kind of ritual [in tragedy] is to investigate its deformation" (Goff (1999) 109). The perversion of ritual is a recurrent feature of tragedy (Segal (1986) 35; Henrichs (2000) 178–89; (2004) 189), but Euripides uses this trope in a distinctive way—often with references to specific cultic activity—to articulate a crisis. Agave and her sisters, who have refused to believe in the divinity of Dionysus, enact a particularly violent form of maenadic ritual when they perform a sparagmos on Pentheus. Normative maenadic behavior might involve the distribution of pieces of raw meat (if we accept an inscription from Miletus [LSAM 48.2–3] as evidence), but Dionysus punishes both Agave and her son Pentheus by leading them to a hyperbolic version of his worship. In the messenger's report, Agave is like "a priestess" with her victim (1114) as she dismembers her son. Here and elsewhere Euripides distorts the performance of sacrifice, the most ubiquitous and important of Greek rituals, to accentuate a crisis. In his seminal work *Violence and the Sacred*, René Girard argues that sacrifice contains violence within cultural norms and establishes communal solidarity. By contrast, Agave's sparagmos, performed with no sacrificial implement and uncontained by any social mechanism, rips apart her family, both literally and figuratively, and dissolves rather than establishes the communality of sacrifice.

Kin slaughter replaces wholesome sacrifice again in *Heracles* (Foley (1985) 152). A purificatory sacrifice after the deliverance of his family from Lycus is the backdrop to Heracles' massacre of his wife and children (922–1015). The family gathers together for the ritual, but sacrifice turns into hunt as Heracles, smitten by insanity, throws down his sacrificial implements and pursues his children still dressed in the funerary garb they had adopted for

their supplication earlier in the play. Normal sacrifice provides a way of imposing meaning and order on animalistic violence. It is a complex semiotic action that seeks to deflect violence from the mortal realm by performing animal slaughter in a sacred context. The system implodes as Heracles pursues and kills his innocent children; order gives way to the chaos of the hunt (Seaford (1995) 378–80).

Euripides' *Electra* sustains the theme of the perverted sacrifice throughout the text (Zeitlin (1970) 645–69; Henrichs (2000) 15–16). Once again the perversion of ritual is associated with the disruption of family. The abnormality of intrafamilial murders is punctuated by a series of flawed religious actions that began with Electra's refusal to attend the Heraia, a festival known as the Hecatombia because of its abundant sacrifices (Zeitlin (1970) 661). Froma Zeitlin suggests that the normative celebration of the Heraia is always in the background of the drama and counterpoints the distorted sacrifices. Of course Aeschylus had used the motif of the perverted sacrifice in his *Oresteia*, which dealt with the same events, as Zeitlin has also demonstrated. (Zeitlin (1965) 463–508), but Euripides has contextualized the theme within the specificity of a festival that took place in his own time. Although the Heraia is associated with normal sacrifical practices, the plots and intrigues of the tragedy are enacted within abnormal versions of sacrifice. Orestes murders Aegisthus while he is sacrificing to the nymphs, and thus animal slaughter leads to one of the most detailed descriptions of murder in tragedy (*Electra* 774–858). Subsequently the killing of Clytemnestra takes place at a fictitious purificatory birth ritual and Orestes describes the matricide as a form of sacrifice (1222–23, 1294; Henrichs (2000) 178).

If we accept that sacrifice operates as a substitution of an animal victim for human, the horror that tragedy imagines is especially visceral when that substitution is reversed and a human replaces a beast. There is very little evidence that such human sacrifices were part of Greek religion, but the fantasy reveals the symbolism of animal sacrifice. With the murder of Aegisthus the poet physically superimposes a human victim on the sacrificial animal (Henrichs (2000) 187); the substitution is inverted on the other hand when Iphigenia is rescued from the altar and replaced by a deer.

Other tragedians dealt with the sacrifice of Iphigenia, but Euripides has a characteristic interest in the sacrificial virgin. Like Iphigenia at Aulis, his human sacrifices go willingly to their immolation; in this respect they are exemplary victims, for the best animal sacrifices are those that nod their agreement. In *Hecuba* Polyxena accepts sacrifice so that she can die free, and she is admired by the Greek soldiers for her bravery. Iphigenia submits to her death for patriotic reasons in *Iphigenia at Aulis*; Macaria offers herself as sacrifice to save Athens in the *Heracleidae*; so do the daughters of Erechtheus in his name play; likewise Menoeceus, the only male sacrificial virgin, dies on behalf of Thebes in *Phoenician Women*. In all these cases Eurpides stresses that human sacrifice is an act of bravery because the victims consented to their death (Foley (2001) 121–3).

5 False Rituals

On occasion Euripides highlights the theatrical element of ritual to illuminate it as a form of drama, with costume, scripts, and roleplaying. His characters will pretend to engage in a sacrifice or some religious act, but they are playacting for ulterior motives. These pretenses contribute to important plot developments or resolutions. Agamemnon summons Iphigenia and Clytemnestra to Aulis with the promise of marriage to Achilles, but the deceit leads to the sacrifice of his young daughter. Here marriage and death are thematically conflated as they so often are in tragedy. The equation can be explained on a symbolic level by noting that marriage is a passage from one stage of life to another, and is the metaphoric death of a girl's childhood identity (Rehm (1994) 11–42). *Iphigenia at Aulis* epitomizes this correspondence by substituting one form of ritual for the other. The pretext of marriage cloaks the reality of sacrifice. But the reality of sacrifice turns out to be ambiguous, since the narrative of Iphigenia's immolation (if the ending of the play is genuine) suggests that she has been rescued by Artemis and replaced with a deer.

It is women, the stereotypically duplicitous sex, who engage in the most explicit pseudo rituals. As we have seen, Electra lures Clytemnestra to her death by inviting her to a purification ritual after a nonexistent childbirth. In a more beneficial mode, Helen and Iphigenia formulate their escapes from Egypt and Tauris respectively by pretending that rituals must be performed on or near the open sea. Helen plays the role of a grieving widow to deceive Theoclymenus into giving her provisions for Menelaus' funeral aboard ship: garments, weapons, the ship itself and an unblemished sacrificial animal (*Hel*. 1242–72). The rituals for a missing corpse—which of course will never be performed—are perhaps evocative of state funerals held for Athenians missing in action (Allan (2008) 289). But the false ritual is consonant with the theme of the play which features a simulacrum of Helen whose phantom was taken to Troy. Things are not what they seem in this drama.

A counterfeit ritual similarly allows Iphigenia and Orestes to escape from Thoas and the Taurians where Iphigenia has been compelled to officiate over human sacrifice as the priestess in a cult of Tauric Artemis. The escape of the siblings depends on the theft of the statue of Artemis, which is to be given a new home in a Greek shrine. As Christian Wolff notes, the pretense of ritual cleansing and purification of the sacrificial victim actually accomplishes the final purification of Orestes still defiled by matricide (Wolff (1992) 317). More obviously, however, the pretense of the Plynteria, or ritual statue washing, gives Iphigenia, Orestes and Pylades access to the sea, a ship, and freedom.

Since both *Helen* and *Iphigenia in Tauris* deal with alternative versions of myths, and accordingly suggest that canonical narratives are false, these pretenses at ritual contribute to the theme of illusion. Euripides emphasizes and plays with the relationship between ritual and theater to illustrate that performing a ritual involves stepping out of one's everyday persona and acting a part. Ritual removes the celebrant from the mundane and brings about an altered state of being. In a radical version of this roleplaying Dionysus dresses Pentheus as a maenad. Scholars have discerned elements of ritual transvestism associated with ephebic rites of passage that are now elided with theatrical roleplaying (Segal (1982) 262–71). Like a participant in a ritual, Pentheus sets aside his identity and experiences an altered world with two suns in which Dionysus appears as a bull (*Bacchae* 918–76). Pentheus' tragedy is such

that he will not survive the experience, and the dissolution of his identity is made permanent by the fragmentation of his physical being. It is he who is the dupe in this simulation of ritual.

6 Syncretism

For Euripides the creation of drama is contingent on the world of ritual. This is not to say that drama is ritual per se, since ritual is repetitive while a dramatic production is singular. To be more precise then: Euripides creates texture for his drama from diverse ritual elements. This includes his manipulation of syncretism, a historical process by which one god absorbs the traits or cultic practices of a similar god. This weaving together of different cultic strands enriched the everevolving polytheism of classical Athens which had a well established practice of blending imported religious elements from the East together with its own established religion.

As an astute scholar of the religion of his polis, Euripides decorates his tragedies with exotic details from these hybrid forms of worship. When the Chorus of *Ion* invokes Enodia (1048), a version of Hecate goddess of witchcraft, as the daughter of Demeter, they combine her with Persephone, whose role as queen of the dead is suggestive of magic. Here the fusion adds a colorful touch at a moment of heightened suspense just as Creusa is about to send poison to Ion. More striking examples of syncretism feature a blending of the attributes and narratives of foreign gods with those of more familiar Greek gods. The poet takes advantage of his society's syncretistic tendency to add flavor to his text, often in the choral odes. Thus the Chorus of *Iphigenia in Tauris*, addressing Artemis as "Dictynna of the mountains" (127), combines her with a Cretan hunting goddess who had several common features with Artemis. The conflation highlights the foreignness and perhaps the bloodthirstiness of Tauric Artemis whom Iphigenia serves.

But Euripides' use of syncretism can be more than an exotic accent. A combination of ritual details might reflect a theme, as when the Chorus of priests in the fragmentary *Cretans* sings of becoming "an initiate of Idaean Zeus and a herdsman of nocturnal Zagreus, having feasted on raw flesh. Bearing torches to the Mountain Mother among the Curetes, I was sanctified and named a bakchos " (*Cretans* fr. 1.9–20, 472 K). They continue to describe the purity of their lifestyle which precluded eating "living food." Was this mixture of different ritual elements, with vegetarian priests indulging in *homophagia*, a historical reality? It is unlikely that Euripides is documenting actual religious syncretism here, but rather he exploits his audience's familiarity with the process to accentuate the peculiar subject matter of the myth. The eclectic combination of different, and even contradictory ritual elements, probably serves as a prelude to the unnatural hybridism of the baby minotaur whose birth will be revealed in this tragedy (Allan (2004) 133).

One of the most prevalent syncretized deities was the Anatolian Mother goddess, later known as Cybele, whose shrine in the agora, the Metroon, became the archive for official state documents in Athens. By the time Euripides produced his dramas, her cult, which featured orgiastic rites, music, and dancing, had been established in Athens for at least a century. As the

fragment from *Cretans* and a section of the parodos of the *Bacchae* (78–82) illustrate, she has a natural affinity with the rites of Dionysus. Her maternal attributes facilitated a conflation with Demeter whose altar (and that of Kore) stood beside the Metroon (Roller (1996) 175). Correspondingly there were statues of the Anatolian mother at Eleusis, the sanctuary of Demeter and her daughter.

Although the Anatolian mother goddess had been integrated into Demetrian cult for many years, Euripides was the first poet to feature the syncretism of the two goddesses. The Mountain Mother makes her literary debut in the perplexing second stasimon of *Helen* which features the most extensive example of Euripidean syncretism. In a thrumming rhythm reminiscent of the kettledrums of Cybele, the song narrates the Mountain Mother's search for her abducted unnamed daughter, a search to which Athena and Artemis lend assistance. There are conspicuous similarities with the narrative of Demeter's search for Persephone. The goddess inflicts blight and drought, but the story is adapted so that festivals cease, although Aphrodite's fluteplaying finally appeases the goddess. Since there is little mythology for the Mountain Mother, who nonetheless shared some conceptual terrain with Demeter, Euripides transplants her into the myth of Demeter (Allan (2008) 295).

Performed at a pivotal moment in the play, as Helen consults the prophetic Theonoë, the "Mountain Mother Ode" has suffered from charges of irrelevance. Its significance might be clearer if the second antistrophe were intact, but there are obvious points of contact between the mythic narrative and the central story of the play. Helen is swept away to Egypt while picking flowers, just as Persephone is abducted by Hades (245–50) (Foley (2001) 307–10; Allan (2008) 305). Euripides structures the choral narrative along the lines of a mythic pattern connected to one of the most important cults of the ancient world whose rituals were practiced by many members of his audience. The story of Helen's reunion with Menelaus becomes equated with the story of Persephone's return to her mother, a story of renewal and hope that was at the core of this enduring cult. The stasimon reflects the play's central meaning and the theme of hope and salvation. Interestingly—and this is a departure from the epic and Orphic versions of the tale—the grieving goddess is palliated by music, a selfreflexive detail that does not exactly correspond to Helen's situation as much as to the audience of the play whose religious act of watching the play offers a glimmer of hope during a historically difficult period.

7 Priestesses

Euripides is famous for his female characters, and hence it is hardly surprising that many of the religious behaviors featured in his drama involve women: the Argive Heraia, the Delian choirs, the cult of Iphigenia at Brauron, and maenadism (albeit an extreme version). These cultic activities reflect the social realities of his time. Citizen women may have been excluded from the political life of Athens, but religion allowed them a public life either as worshippers or functionaries. A fragment of *The Captive Melanippe*, (fr. 494 K) presumably spoken by Melanippe herself, claims that women have the "greatest part in divine affairs." The speaker lists women's holy offices at Apollo's oracles, and as interpreters of the will of Zeus at

Dodona, their ritual duties for the Moirai (the Fates) and the "nameless goddesses" (i.e. the *Semnai Theai*). The visual record (most notably pottery) supports these claims with depictions of women engaging in, and often predominating in, every aspect of ritual including leading processions, giving prayers and offering libations, and participating in sacrifices (Connelly (2007) 166).

Among women's most conspicuous and revered religious roles were the priesthoods. There were several female priests in Athens, most of whom inherited the position by virtue of their membership in a *genos* (or family unit). Indeed one of the most important priesthoods in Athens, male or female, was the priestess of Athena Polias ("Athena of the City"), who was always chosen from the Eteoboutidae clan and who, like many other priests, held the position for life. Among her duties she presided over sacrifices for Athena, the tutelary deity of the city (Dillon (2002) 84–5; Connelly (2007) 59–64). The *Erechtheus* provides an *aition* for the position when Athena makes Praxithea, mother of the patriotic selfsacrificing Erechtheids, the priestess of her cult and gives her the right to make burnt sacrifices "for the city on my altars" (fr. 65.96–97). If Joan Breton Connelly's speculation is correct, Praxithea is the central figure in the enigmatic Parthenon frieze where she is depicted in her role as the first priestess of Athena Polias (Connelly (1996) 58).

Women had other major roles to play in the cult of Athena Polias. When the Chorus of Trojan women in *Hecuba* imagine themselves participating in the weaving of Athena's robe, they refer to the cult of the Arrhephoroi which comprised select Athenian girls (and from which, as foreign slaves, they would have been excluded). The Athenian Chorus of *Heraclidae* (781–83), in their prayer to Athena, remind her of sacrifices at the Panathenaia, the Choruses of young men, the women's ritual cry (the *ololugma*), and the maidens' dances at the *pannychia*, or allnight festival. Worship of Athena was organized according to gender, with women's roles as crucial as men's.

With the exception of Praxithea, the priestess of Athena Polias does not make an appearance in extant Euripidean tragedy, and the only other priestess who presides over sacrifice is Iphigenia who serves Artemis at Tauris. Even within the barbaric context of human sacrifice she is given a recognizably Greek attribute when the Chorus describe her as a *kleidouchos* (131), a reference to the female priest's function as keeper of the temple keys. The temple key, a long metal bar with two bends, is a consistent iconographic signifier of women's priestly status in vase painting, and might have been a stage prop in this play and others. Indeed it is possible that Euripides influenced the depiction of Iphigenia on an Apulian skyphos (BM F 127; Connelly (2007) 15, 97). When she leaves Tauris, Iphigenia will take on the role of priestess of Artemis at Brauron, and again she is specifically designated as keyholder (1463).

As a priestess Iphigenia has the authority to persuade Thoas that she must perform certain rituals to purify the cult statue of Artemis. Her deception of Thoas is a significant form of agency that leads to salvation and escape for her family and fellow Greeks, but also results in a more attenuated priestly identity for Iphigenia herself. Her final role is as a Greek priestess in service to a less dangerous form of Artemis at Brauron where she will be buried and receive the dedication of garments from women who died in childbirth (1462–7). Bloodletting, a

symbol for sacrifice, will take place in a more masculine context at a cult established by Orestes in Halai. Thus the text ends with a division of sacral acts that reflects the gendered ideology of Athens.

In *Ion*, the Delphic priestess of Apollo, although she makes only a single appearance towards the end of the drama, has been the focus of attention from the beginning. The impetus of the action has been a consultation with the Pythia about the sterile marriage of Creusa and her foreign husband Xuthus. Her authority is so exemplary that her pronouncements to Xuthus mislead him into believing that Ion is his son. When she makes her brief but significant appearance before the audience she speaks directly to Creusa and Ion and reveals the tokens that were in baby Ion's basket. She thus brings about the recognition and reconciliation of Ion and Creusa, and the consequent dynastic continuity of the Erechtheid line. Similarly the figure of Theonoë plays a pivotal role in *Helen*. She is not a priestess per se, but she has a special connection with the gods as her name attests (13–15). She is able to prophesize Menelaus' arrival and at a critical moment she agrees to support his cause in a divine contest that would either let her brother Theoclymenus take possession of Helen, or let Helen escape with Menelaus. In other words she has the power of a goddess to determine events.

All three of these figures are virgins. Iphigenia is a lifelong *parthenos*, the Pythia was historically unmarried, and Theonoë's innate association with Dike or Justice is explicitly associated with her abstinence from sexuality (*Helen* 1002–08). Virginity was not a necessary qualification for all offices of priestess, although ritual celibacy was required in many cases. But in myth the virgin is often a figure of agency, since she is seldom overtly subordinate to a male figure. The hieratic status of these three women combined with their relative independence from male authority gives them a certain amount of autonomy and power.

By contrast the figure of Cassandra in *Trojan Women*, at one time a priestess of Apollo, has been raped by Ajax in the temple of Athena (*Trojan Women* 69–70). Although she was an important figure in the lost first play of the trilogy, we cannot reconstruct how she might have been portrayed. Nonetheless it is virtually certain that her insight into the destructive potential of her infant brother Paris was ultimately useless. When she makes her appearance in *Trojan Women* she describes herself as a *latris* or "servant" of Apollo, and then rips off her sacerdotal wreathes (450), a gesture that recalls her spectacular scene in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (1265–70). Euripides captures the moment when Cassandra ceases to be a priestess, which occurs not in Argos but in Troy. Her withdrawal from the cultic life of Troy is consistent with Athena and Poseidon's abandonment of the city. Troy will cease to exist not only because of its physical annihilation, but also because it has no spiritual presence.

Cassandra's position as a powerless sexual commodity contrasts with the apparent potency of other sacerdotal females in Euripides. Nonetheless more critical readings of those female characters suggest that they are not as authoritative or independent as we might first think, and indeed they conform in many ways to the gender ideology of fifthcentury Athens (Goff (2004) 331–50). For example, although the Pythia offers information that facilitates the reunion of Ion and Creusa, she herself, despite her role as conduit to the divine mind, has no knowledge about the identity of the foundling child. Her intervention seems to be in accordance with Apollo's

plan, and she is only an intermediary with very little power. In the final analysis her role is to ensure that an Athenian prince assumes his birthright and continues the royal dynasty. Likewise Theonoë's intervention hinges on Helen's status as a commodity and its purpose is to restore her to the possession of Menelaus.

In conclusion therefore, we note that Euripides represents women's authority in the religious sphere, but tempers that authority by ensuring that female religious potency is directed towards maintaining social norms of gender.

8 Conclusion

Aristotle called Euripides "the most tragic" of the poets for good reason (*Poetics* 13). His gods are vindictive, implacable, and capricious. A frequent epilogue, almost interchangeable among his tragedies, is "expect the unexpected." Mortals exist in a mutable universe where random acts of divine cruelty—such as Hera's persecution of Heracles or Aphrodite's exploitation of Phaedra—can broadside an unsuspecting man or woman. Yet Euripides also recognizes the regularizing force of religion—the formulaic gestures that have been repeated and will be repeated, and which therefore represent the expected. Even within the most tragic texts there is usually some prospect of normative controllable cultic behavior that mitigates a universe of unpredictable catastrophe.

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FURTHER READING

For an excellent review of the religion of fifthcentury Athens see Parker (1996) 122–217. A general discussion of the relationship of tragedy to ritual can be found in Easterling (1988) 87–109. SourvinouInwood (2003) 291–458 discusses the problematics of ritual in Euripides from the cultural perspective of his contemporaries. Mastronarde (2002) 17–49 reviews Euripidean theology, and Yunis (1988) explores the Athenian context for Euripides' treatment of religion. For a persuasive discussion of Hygiainon's attempt to use *Hippolytus* 612 to discredit Euripides see Avery (1968) 19–35. Further remarks on Euripides' concerns with

oaths and perjury can be found in Fletcher (2003) 29–44 and 2012. There are many approaches the cultic details of specific plays, and I can only give a sample of them here. The most accessible include Johnston (1997) 44–70 who gives a provocative theory of the origins of the cult for Medea's children, and Zweig (1999) 158–80 on female coming of age rituals in *Helen*. Ekroth (2003) 59–118 discusses the relationship between *Iphigenia in Tauris* and the Brauronian cult. Further discussion of the sacrificial motif in that same play is found in Sansone (1975) 283–95.

CHAPTER 32
Gender

Melissa Mueller

Men and women were two separate species for the ancient Greeks. In Hesiod's cosmogonic poem, the *Theogony*, the origin of mankind remains untold, creating the impression that men were simply there from the beginning. By contrast, the origin of womankind is related twice, once in the *Theogony* (507–616) and again in the *Works and Days* (42–105); in each case it is linked with related myths about the origins of sacrifice and agriculture.[1] In the *Theogony*, for example, Zeus creates the "species and tribes of women" (*genos kai phula gunaikôn*, 591) as an inescapable curse on men for their acquisition of Promethean fire. Ever since, Hesiod's narrative(s) implies, men have had to plow the earth for sustenance, sacrifice to the gods, and take wives in order to beget progeny. This triad of marriage, sacrifice, and agriculture defines the human condition for Hesiod as for other early Greek poets. Woman's entrance on the scene marks the fall of mankind from a godlike, goldenage existence.

Whereas the Homeric epics essentially adopt wholesale the misogynistic worldview outlined by Hesiod's poems, Greek tragedy challenges the binary structure of gender relations represented as normative in archaic epic. This is not to say that there are no interesting, subtly fashioned female characters in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Penelope certainly rivals her husband's masterful *mêtis* ("cunning intelligence") as she threatens to wrest control of the narrative in the *Odyssey*'s final books. But the world evoked by the Homeric epics is a warrior culture, a society where men win their greatest honor and make their names on the battlefield (or returning home from it), while women are captured as war booty. As wives, women in Homer—Penelope not least of all—exercise a particular brand of feminine agency within the domestic sphere.

Women's close association with the interior realm of the oikos ("household") is taken for granted in tragedy, yet their actions still have political consequences. Sophocles's Antigone, for example, famously upholds the unwritten laws about the burial rights of the dead in the face of Creon's tyrannical prohibition, while in Euripides, virgins willingly sacrifice themselves so that their cities may be saved (on the latter, see Fletcher in this volume).

In the early part of the twentieth century, A. Gomme (1925) concluded—from his impression of tragedy's powerful females—that the women of classical Athens were as liberated as his female British contemporaries. Gomme was not alone in this assumption. Beyond the academy, suffragettes were already turning to Euripides' heroines as role models of the emancipated woman. As Edith Hall ((1999) 44) writes:

> *Medea* not only offered the authority of Classical Drama to a contemporary cause, but can be understood […] as one of the founding dramas in the prolific genre of suffragette plays and songs which were placed before the public from 1907 onwards.

Suffragettes notwithstanding, Gomme's conflation of representation and reality was, of course, naïve: fictional women do not necessarily reflect the social position of real women in a society. Still, the status, social function, and ideological cast of these fictional women have been hotly contested in the years since. Not surprisingly, changing theories about the nature and construction of gender in our own lives have influenced and will continue to reshape our understanding of the sociological underpinnings of gender in Greek tragedy.

The conditions for the study of gender in Euripides are different (than, say, in Aeschylus or Sophocles) in so far as the poet's own attitude toward women has been at various times at the center of the debate.[2] Was Euripides a misogynist, as the ancient biographical tradition suggests? Was he a feminist *avant la lettre*? No other ancient Greek author has divided critical opinion so sharply. But as William Allan ((2000) 163) notes:

> To formulate our inquiry in terms of misogyny or feminism involves blurring the shape and impact of the texts by viewing them through a peculiarly modern set of concerns, while it also presupposes an erroneous correspondence between the views espoused by fictional characters and those of the author.

Drawing inferences about an author's sociopolitical views from his (or her) fictional works is no longer fashionable, yet the complex representations of men and women in Euripidean drama continue to fascinate readers. This chapter accordingly falls into two parts: In the first, I briefly sketch some of the key responses to gender in tragedy scholarship of recent decades. In the second part I turn to a few plays in greater detail and contextualize their representations of sexual identities, and their unexpectedly modern tendency to theorize gender as a performative category.

1 Critical Responses

In the contest of the poets in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, Aeschylus brags that his tragedies are full of "real" men (1040–44):

> And you can see the stamp of Homer on my own work clearly enough. I depicted men of valour—lionhearted characters like Patroclus and Teucer—encouraging the audience to identify with these heroes when the call to battle came. I didn't clutter the stage with whores like Phaedra and Stheneboea. No one can say I ever put a lustful woman into a play.
>
> (Trans. David Barrett and Shomit Dutta)

Aeschylus presents himself as the creator of heroic, manly characters and of tragedies whose didacticism and morally inspiring content could save the citizenry of Athens, particularly during the Peloponnesian War, which was in its twentysixth year when *Frogs* was produced in 405 BCE. Phaedra and Stheneboea (a character in Euripides' lost *Bellerophon* as well as another lost tragedy that bore her name) have been chosen by Aeschylus to illustrate the moral depravity of Euripidean tragedy. Both are married women who fall in love with and bring false charges against the men who have rebuffed them. Tragically enamored, and with their reputations destroyed (even though neither is technically guilty of adultery), both women

eventually commit suicide. Yet the tradition (beginning with Aristophanes) frames them (and others like them) as "bad women," an expression coined by T.B.L. Webster, in his 1967 book, *The Tragedies of Euripides*. The second chapter of Webster's book contains the section header, "Other plays about bad women: *Aigeus, Stheneboia, Phoinix, Peleus*." This follows upon two earlier sections, one on *Medea* and another devoted to "The Phaidra plays."

In Webster's lingo, "bad women" captures (and oversimplifies) the complex characterization of luststricken heroines; unfortunately, the expression took on a life of its own, and came to be used rather freely of all women in tragedy, creating the impression that misogyny was somehow woven into the fabric of the genre, both at the point of creation and of reception. Christiane SourvinouInwood ((1989) 140) claims, for example, that "the Athenian audience would have perceived Antigone as a woman out of her proper place acting against what is considered proper female behaviour, as a 'bad woman'." And Barbara Goff ((1990) 94) points out Euripides' "insistence on ugly realism and his fascination with bad women." Scholars use the phrase to focalize the response of ancient viewers, but not all spectators should be imagined as having such a scathingly negative take on Euripidean women. (I assume that Euripides' target audience consisted primarily of male viewers, but for a recent reassessment of the evidence for women's attendance, see Roselli ((2011) 158–94.)

Classical scholars, unlike anthropologists, do not have recourse to the firstperson testimony of informants. We cannot simply ask members of Sophocles' audience whether Antigone was, in their view, a "bad woman." It has therefore been necessary to theorize audience responses by reconstructing the sexgender system of classical Athens. The system is revealed to us, piecemeal and indirectly, by literary and archaeological sources. Naturally, scholars disagree about how to interpret those sources. Michael Shaw's (1975) analysis of the "female intruder" has been influential. For Shaw, the "female intruder" is any female in tragedy who enters the public sphere. Forced, typically, to take action because of a male transgression, she goes on to commit a crime more heinous than the one directed against her or her family, thus validating the cultural logic behind her seclusion: the frighteningly articulate and murderous women of the tragic theater reaffirm patriarchal ideologies by demonstrating their necessity.

Others have questioned whether Athenian women really lived out their lives in silence and seclusion, whether the mere appearance of a woman outside her house (especially on stage) would have been cause for alarm. David Cohen (1989), for example, has argued that, even if the cultural ideal was a woman who kept out of the public eye, it does not follow that Athenian women were actually hidden from view.[3] Cohen cites the experience of a social anthropologist working in a Greek village. Having "read about powerless submissive females who considered themselves morally inferior to men," he was surprised to discover "physically and socially strong women who had a great deal to say about what took place in the village" ((Cohen (1989) 4), citing M. Clark ((1983) 122). Classical scholars, argues Cohen ((1989) 4), "have fallen prey to the same trap, failing to distinguish between ideology and (sometimes conflicting) normative ideals on the one hand, and the life of the society on the other."

Helene Foley is another scholar to break with the idea of the "bad woman." In her important review essay, Foley (1981a) eschews the moralizing discourse of "good" and "bad" and

instead contextualizes the decisions made by tragic females in light of the societal (and generic) expectations governing their choices. Foley concedes that, crossculturally, women have been excluded from public life while men have aligned themselves with cultural and political institutions. But she resists "the simple equation female: oikos as male: polis," arguing that it "does not hold on the Greek stage ((1981a) 161)." In a muchexpanded argument, Foley (2001) suggests that females in tragedy are essentially "outsiders," both in their marriages and in the polis. The structure of Greek marriage is such that a bride is taken from her father's household and settled in her husband's, where (ideally) she will bear him sons who will carry on his family's name. But affective ties are not always so easily transferred. More often than not, women remained divided between conflicting obligations to their natal and conjugal families. The example of Hermione in Euripides' *Andromache* is, in this respect, instructive. Ironically, as Foley ((2001) 87–105) argues, the true foreigner, Andromache, is in a stronger position than Hermione to claim her husband's affection. Even as a concubine Andromache is better integrated than his Greek wife into Neoptolemus' oikos, having recently borne him a son. This despite the fact that Neoptolemus himself is the son of the man who killed Andromache's former husband, Hector. What makes it easier, as it were, for Andromache is that her natal household has been abolished; her loyalties are thus pulled in only one direction.

At the time of Foley's (1981a) earlier essay, scholars had recourse to two main critical approaches in attempting to explain tragedy's abiding interest in femalecentric plots: a psychoanalytic model, as put forward by Philip Slater (1968), sought to ground tragedy's gender narratives in the childrearing practices of the ancient Greeks which, Slater had argued, inculcated in Athenian males intense feelings of ambivalence toward the mother. A second approach took its lead from French structuralist thought, particularly the ideas of Ferdinand de Saussure and Claude LéviStrauss.

LéviStrauss ((1969) 115) describes marriage as a transaction not "between a man and a woman, but between two groups of men." The bride's transfer from her father to her husband forges a new social bond between men. Women themselves are simply the objects of the exchange. This conception of woman's passive role no doubt resonated with certain sectors of the Athenian polis and it (or ideas like it) can be discerned behind the protofeminist rallying cry of a character like Medea, who defiantly asserts that women "buy" husbands with their dowries (*Medea* 231–3). The psychoanalytic and the anthropological approaches have, moreover, been fruitfully refined and brought together in the work of scholars such as Nancy Rabinowitz (1993) and Victoria Wohl (1998). Noting, for example, that intimacy between women is "noticeably absent" in the discourse of Athenian drama, Rabinowitz ((1993) 19–20) argues that seemingly freelychosen acts of selfsacrifice (as, for example, in Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*) are part of a narrative strategy that is complicit in keeping women in circulation as objects.[4] Even those situations in which tragic female characters might be seen as engaging in acts that would lead to their posthumous fame Rabinowitz treats as male fetishizations. Wohl (1998), too, is interested in the ideological functions inscribed in representations of the female. Combining LéviStrauss's theory of the exchange of women with a Lacanian model of male psychosexual development, Wohl ((1998) xxvi) argues that

tragic woman is less a portrayal of lived female experience than "a fantasy—fictional and ideologically invested—through which the male subject thinks about himself and his place in the world." This critical move was in a sense anticipated by Froma Zeitlin, whose model of "playing the other" posits that performing the feminine allowed men, as actors and as citizens of the Athenian polis, to shore up their masculinity.

In tragedy, Zeitlin ((1996) 346) claims, "the self that is really at stake is to be identified with the male, while the woman is assigned the role of the radical other." The feminine exists not for its own sake but as an alternative sexuality to be experienced by the (viewing or acting) male subject. Zeitlin considers the robing scene of Pentheus in Euripides' *Bacchae* to be emblematic of Dionysian theatricality, with its reliance on feminine modes of persuasion and impersonation. For it is only when he is dressed as a woman—"visually feminized"—that Pentheus begins to feel the power of Dionysus and to see the god for what he is. This is a sign, according to Zeitlin ((1996) 363), that he has achieved the "double consciousness" that men can attain only by dressing for and playing female roles. It is this access to male and female perspectives through "playing the other" that tragedy makes available to men.[5] And this accounts for the paradox, as Zeitlin trenchantly puts it, that "theater uses the feminine for the purposes of imagining a fuller model for the masculine self" (363).

Another interpretive strategy has been to focus on "women's voices" in Greek tragedy. Laura McClure (1999) and Judith Mossman (2001 and 2005) have been at the forefront of this effort to identify the distinctive speech patterns of female characters and Choruses. Their scholarship does not claim to study the speech of real Athenian women but rather the way that women were represented as speaking in maleauthored (and maleacted) texts. Nevertheless, such representations provide useful insight into the different speech communities that existed in classical Athens, and the role of language in constituting gendered identities. Greek literary sources, for example, represent women as speaking in one style when they are in an all female group, and another when they are in mixed company, or addressing a male interlocutor. As Mossman (2001) 378 remarks of Euripides' *Electra*, when in the presence of men, "Electra [couches] her speech in particularly careful terms" because she finds it desirable "to underline her conformity with generally accepted moral thinking by using platitudes." Like her mother, and like almost all women in tragedy, Electra is acutely conscious of public opinion and the potentially devastating effect of gossip on her reputation. McClure's 1999 study takes the content and style of female speech in tragedy as the starting point for more general observations about the construction of ancient sexuality. Uncontrolled speech, McClure argues, was interpreted as a sign of uncontrolled sexuality, whereas silence suggested containment, verbal and sexual.

These two approaches—the one focusing on women's voices and the other on the construction of the male subject—are not mutually exclusive. The former privileges the aesthetics of gendered verbal performances on the tragic stage; the latter examines tragedy's broader contribution to the creation of gendered selves (primarily male selves) in Athenian society. Taken together, both kinds of scholarship illustrate the variety of methods, issuing from fields as diverse as sociolinguistics, anthropology, sociology, and psychoanalysis, scholars have used to explore tragic gender. But as even this brief survey makes clear, the critical tide has

turned away from interpreting the representations of women in Greek drama as reflections of the historical realities of women's lives. Of much greater concern now is how to gauge the effect of the feminine on the male (and perhaps even the female) viewer. This shift of focus, from reality to performance and the performative follows the trend of feminist scholarship.

Feminism and the feminist scholarship of the 1960s and 1970s were instrumental in bringing Women's Studies to academic prominence. But during the 1980s and 1990s, the critical energies that had been directed at recovering, critiquing, and reenvisioning the role of women in history and society gave way to a discomfort with the term "woman" as a category of analysis. Even to posit the existence of "woman" as an individual, not to mention "women" as a collective, was—it was argued—to ascribe a fixed and stable identity (i.e., womanhood) to a status that was in fact called into being by the very terms of analysis that purported to describe it. One became a "woman" by being compelled to selfidentify with the term. Judith Butler's influential *Gender Trouble* (1990a) was pivotal in effecting the disciplinary realignment from "Women's Studies" to "Gender Studies." With its attention to the performative power of language and the implicitly heterosexual bias of much feminist scholarship, Butler's work and other similarly revisionist attacks on feminism (e.g., Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet* and Monique Wittig's *The Straight Mind*) helped to recast the way in which the academic study of gender was practiced.

"Gender reality is performative," writes Butler ((1990b) 270), "which means, quite simply, that it is real only to the extent that it is performed." Greek tragedy offers a particularly rich set of texts for performative analyses of gender, given that the "women" in these plays were all acted by men. Whatever is feminine about these staged women is purely a result of theatrical mimesis, of performance. Audiences would have perceived the actors as female (or at any rate as playing women) through stylized gestures and verbal acts. Like such actors, we too "perform" gender. Gender is not something with which our bodies are "passively scripted" (277). Nor is it a completely improvised set of acts. Rather, as Butler ((1990b) 277) expresses it, "the gendered body acts its part in a culturally restricted corporeal space" and "within the confines of already existing directives." Butler's theatrical metaphor will be useful to keep in mind as we survey some of the more memorable performances of gender on the Euripidean stage. I will focus in particular on female characters since they, more so even than their counterparts in Sophocles and Aeschylus, display an implicit awareness of gender as a performative status.

2 Gender in Context

Aristotle's *Poetics* maintains that for each class of persons (e.g., slaves, women, and men) there is a different kind of excellence. Courage, for example, may be good in a man, but "it is inappropriate for a woman to be courageous or clever in this way" (1454a22–23). By Aristotelian standards, many of Euripides' female characters are inappropriately courageous. Medea, Hecuba, and Phaedra, for example, pursue goals—revenge and glory—that were suitable only for men. *Andreia*, the word that Aristotle uses, is often translated as "courage," but "manliness" is its literal meaning. The fact that *andreia* denotes a set of behaviors that

align with our understanding of "courage" reinforces the extent to which masculinity was a performative identity. Being a man was predicated on enacting culturally proscribed norms. Men who didn't demonstrate sufficient *andreia* by refusing, for example, to embrace the martial ideal of a glorious death were on ontologically tenuous territory. They risked not being seen as men at all.

In *Alcestis*, Admetus allows his wife, Alcestis, to die in his place. Alcestis wins the glory for this selfsacrifice, while he bitterly mourns her loss. (See Visvardi in this volume for further discussion of Alcestis.) This is not portrayed as heroic or even tragic. It is Alcestis' courage—her willingness to die for her husband—that upsets the gendered balance of power in their marriage. And to the extent that Alcestis wins praise, the men to whom she is linked suffer a corresponding decline in reputation. Both Admetus and his aging father, Pheres, come off looking cowardly and overly attached to life. Although Pheres had earlier praised Alcestis for making the collective existence of *all* women more glorious (623–4), father and son trade verbal abuse, arguing over which of them is least manly. "You dare to call me coward, when you let your woman outdare you?" Pheres reproaches his son (696–7).

In tragedy, as in epic, the actions of an individual woman, whether for good or bad, reflect on the species as a whole—her deeds are treated as representative of her sex. So, from Alcestis' nobility, all women gain good repute. But men, and Alcestis' husband in particular, will suffer a corresponding loss in honor. The dynamic between individual and collective glory and shame is framed somewhat differently for men. In both tragedy and epic, when an individual male wins glory, he stands out from his peers: his glory does not affect men as a collective. Similarly, the man who behaves like a coward jeopardizes only his own masculinity; he does not bring shame to the male race. Applying this principle to his own situation, Admetus voices the reaction that he imagines others will have when they learn that Alcestis has died in his place (955–7): "Look at the man, disgracefully alive, who dared not die, but like a coward gave his wife instead and so escaped death. *Do you call him a man at all*? (my emphasis)"

It is distinctive of Euripides' worldturnedupsidedown aesthetic that in his plays women and old men attain glory, while men in the prime of life succumb to antiheroic impulses. Bernard Knox (1964) coined the phrase "heroic temper" to describe a typically Sophoclean character type. For Knox, heroes with a heroic temper privilege dying nobly over anything else that life might offer; they are driven towards this single goal, ignoring the pleas of friends and family who implore them to consider other options. Sophoclean masculinity is the expression of the heroic imperative, concisely formulated by Ajax as he is contemplating suicide. A truly noble man, Ajax says, either "lives well or dies nobly" (479–80). There is no value in a life lived without honor, a life without the hope of battlewon glory.

Among Euripidean characters, however, it is Medea—a wife and a mother—who best fits the profile of the heroically tempered male (as Knox himself realized; see also the chapter by Swift in this volume). Euripidean mothers are strangely focused on power and glory. Alcestis, Medea, Hecuba, and Alcmene—all are mothers who act essentially on their own (their husbands are either absent or ineffectual) to secure the fate they deem most desirable for their children. In three out of four cases this involves exacting a gruesome revenge. In classical

Athens it was normally the father who passed on his name and his reputation to his children, and Alcestis understands how her death will upset this tradition. Because of her heroic self sacrifice, Admetus's children will be known as *her* children (325), just as her husband will be able to boast that he married the best of wives (323–4). Only after she has extracted from her husband a promise not to remarry does Alcestis officially grant him legal custody of the children, on terms of her choosing (*epi toisde paidas cheiros ex emês dechou*, 375). This is a stark reversal of Athenian social realities.

The preoccupation with reputation was, it bears repeating, considered improper for a woman. At the very end of the Funeral Oration in Thucydides, Pericles speaks famous words to the women in his audience (Thucydides 2.45.2): "Your great glory is not to be inferior to your nature, and the greatest glory of a woman is to be least talked about by men, whether they are praising you or criticizing you" (adapted from the translation by Rex Warner). Women, in other words, should have no reputation at all. They are advised by Pericles not to do anything that might generate public commentary, a credo that Euripidean heroines defy in spectacular ways. For like Alcestis, Medea carefully calibrates her actions with a view to her posthumous fame. Alcestis' death secures her reputation as the best of wives. Medea, however, intends to make her name by avenging her husband's betrayal of their marriage. (Jason has recently married the Corinthian King's daughter, despite having children with Medea.)

Crucial to Medea's revenge strategy is the support of the Chorus. Being a foreigner herself, Medea seeks common ground with these Corinthian women by alluding to their shared suffering at the hands of men. The Chorus expresses their sympathy with Medea in their first stasimon, where they sing of the rivers flowing backwards. Here they venture to hope that women will no longer be the subject of "evilsounding fame" (420). But it is clear that their optimistic prophecy has not been fulfilled by the play's end. Like Ajax, Medea fears the laughter of her enemies. This fear and the desire to punish her husband propel her toward a crime that makes the Chorus shudder; Jason denounces her as "a monster, not a woman" (1342). By grafting a heroic profile onto the character of Medea whom he has also (for the first time in the mythic tradition) made into a childkiller, Euripides confronts his audience with a dilemma. Has the heroic impulse driven this gloryobsessed woman over the edge? Is the heroic code itself to blame? Or is she simply the monster that Jason makes her out to be, guilty of a crime that, in her husband's words, no Greek woman could have committed? Medea's identity as a woman, and her status as both victim and avenger, render her deeply sympathetic but at the same time terrifying.

In his moving portrayal of vengeful mothers, Euripides makes it impossible to reach clear moral assessments of their actions. Medea and Hecuba (in plays of the same name) are both involved in the murder of young children. Yet each character is first introduced to us as a victim of male transgression. Medea's husband has abandoned her in a foreign city. Hecuba's supposed friend, Polymestor, has stolen from her and killed her son. The rage felt by both women is justified, but their actions perhaps less easy to defend. That their maternal personas are carefully developed early on suggests that the playwright is testing the limits of audience sympathy for the monstrous figures they become. One should not, however, discount the seriousness of their crimes. As Anne Pippin Burnett ((1998) 144) observes, "Tales of feminine

revenge attracted motifs such as cannibalism, childmurder, incest, and human sacrifice to provide a suitable setting for a woman who took a man's role."

In *Hecuba* and *Heracleidae*, vengeful mothers are juxtaposed with their selfsacrificing daughters. Makaria, the idealistic and civicminded daughter of Heracles in the *Heracleidae*, voluntarily offers up her life so that her city—Athens—and the descendants of Heracles may be protected from Eurystheus and his invading Argive army (see also Goslin in this volume.) Polyxena, her counterpart in the *Hecuba*, also insists on dying freely. She makes her sacrifice a freewilled act of courage that will win her *kleos* (545–52, for the report of her death). It is a kind of immortality, but one that has troubled feminist critics. The glorification of female self sacrifice has been viewed as a patriarchal strategy of "disguising the objectification of women that is necessary for their exchange" ((Rabinowitz) 1993: 22).

Hecuba and her female coconspirators blind Polymestor and kill his two sons, prompting Polymestor to lament that "neither earth nor ocean produces a creature as savage and monstrous as woman" (*Hec.* 1180). In *Heracleidae* it is Alcmene, Heracles' aging mother, who wants to see Eurystheus killed before her eyes, even though people will say of her that she doesn't "behave the way a woman should" (979). But just as soon as one is ready to assume that all married women in Euripides are monstrous, the case of Helen (of Euripides's *Helen*, also discussed by Boedeker in this volume) presents itself. The wife of Menelaus, who appears in so many other plays by Euripides as a leitmotif interwoven with tales of sex and adultery, turns out to be chaste of both mind and body. Only her reputation is tainted. *Helen* plays up the name/body (*onoma*/*sôma*) dichotomy through the trope of the double: it is Helen's phantom twin that Paris captures and carries off to Troy, thus spawning the Trojan War and the blame tradition about the woman who started it. Helen herself has been living discreetly in Egypt, at first under the benign guardianship of the late King Proteus. But since his death, she has had to ward off the lewd advances of his less sanctimonious son, Theoclymenus. By staging a Helen who has been faithful to her husband while biding her time in Egypt, Euripides gives dramatic credibility to the alternative tradition, subscribed to also by Stesichorus and Herodotus, that only Helen's phantom went to Troy.

Helen also offers us variations on the distinctively Euripidean themes of female solidarity and female plotters. The Chorus of Greek captive women encourages Helen to seek the priestess Theonoë's help, and they declare their sympathy with her as women (329): "It is right for women to stand by a woman's cause." Helen tricks Theoclymenus into outfitting her with a ship and weapons for her escape. She invents a Greek custom whereby victims of shipwreck, like Menelaus, must be buried at sea, and thus procures the necessary means of escape (1053–4). Only when it is already too late does Theoclymenus realize that he has been "duped and tricked with women's artful treacheries" (1621). Helen, in sum, is a delightfully normal Greek wife. She is resourceful, faithful, and still in love with her middleaged husband, and she wants nothing more than to return with him to Sparta.

The case of Helen suggests that if there is a political agenda that informs the representation of women in Euripides, it is intimately bound up with the equally strong Euripidean tendency to devise characters and plots that break with tradition. Helen does not exist as a fixed dramatic

persona; she changes from one play to the next, proving the point that character, like gender, exists through performance. There is no essential or true "Helen" behind all the diverse dramatic instantiations of her character, whether as text or as live performance. And this is true for all of Euripides' heroines. Each one challenges expectations about how women (ought to) behave on the tragic stage, making it nearly impossible to generalize about gender. For that matter, the frequent depiction in Euripides' plays of emasculated males similarly invites audiences to rethink the more traditional portraits of heroic masculinity.

In *Heracles*, for example, the mythic icon of masculinity who is wellrepresented in the iconographic tradition—for example Heracles wrestling the Nemean Lion—gives way to a physically tormented and deranged Heracles (see also Marshall in this volume). Euripides' Heracles is fully subdued and unmanned by Hera. Heracles returns home, fresh from heroic conquests, to a most bitter, selfunraveling final labor. Under the delusional force of Lyssa, the hero mistakes his own sons for the children of his enemy, Eurystheus, and kills each of them in turn. He murders his wife as well. This inversion of Heracles' heroic past proves the fragility of epic fame. How quickly a lifetime of toil and hardearned glory can be overturned! Whatever was admirable about traditional heroic Heracles is overshadowed by his final act. In Euripides' play, we are introduced to a much darker side of the "hero." We are shown the disruptive, unstable elements beneath the epic façade. Megara's claim, uttered as an apology for speaking out of turn, that women feel anguish more deeply than men (536), is soon challenged by the extremity of the suffering endured by her husband. As Amphitryon comments (1196–7): "Among all men you would not find greater wretchedness, greater suffering than this." The epic ideal of masculinity has been thoroughly deconstructed here, just as the category "woman" was destabilized in the other plays we have examined.

For the Homeric hero, the tradeoff for sacrificing long life is the "undying reputation for glory" (*kleos aphthiton*) proffered by the epic tradition itself. Achilles famously weighs his options in the ninth book of the *Iliad*. Should he return to Phthia, his homeland, where he will see his aged father and live out the full span of his mortal life? Or should he stay in Troy, where he will die in battle but win immortality? The very existence of Homeric epic is predicated on Achilles' choice in favor of *kleos*. In epic, men die young—in war, on the battlefield. For the Euripidean Heracles, by contrast, long life is not posited as an alternative to everlasting glory; it signifies, rather, a glory won that is now lost.

Homeric war is the business of the young, the ambitious, and the übermasculine. In Euripides, war is the province of captive women and old men. The experience and viewpoint of war's victims are privileged. We meet the Trojan wives who follow their husbands' killers into captivity, mothers, like Hecuba, mourning their dead children, and perhaps most surprisingly of all, the ancient fathers and grandfathers, long past the age of battlereadiness, who take up arms with renewed vigor. For instance, it must have been a considerable shock for the audience to see the very old cousin of Heracles, Iolaus, charging into battle in the *Heracleidae*. Or to encounter the aged Cadmus and Tiresias dressed for Bacchic revelry in *Bacchae*. There has been much less scholarship on Euripides' vigorous old men (among whom we should not forget to mention Peleus, in *Andromache*) than on his "manly" women, but they should be analyzed in tandem.

Anthropologist Victor Turner's (1990) concept of social drama helps us to place Euripides' genderbending in its social and historical context. Turner (1990) seeks to define the mechanism that, in industrialized societies, replaces the "multifaceted system" of ritual that once gave aesthetic form to social experience. Arguing that social dramas have an inherently theatrical structure, comprising a breach, crisis, redress, and positive or negative denoument "plot" sequence, Turner describes the interaction between social drama and stage drama as a figureeight feedback loop (see Figure 1.3 in Turner (1990) 17). In Turner's analysis (1990) 16), the stage drama functions as "metacommentary […] on the major social dramas of its social context (wars, revolutions, scandals, institutional changes)." Stage dramas "feed back into the *latent* processual structure of the social drama" (emphasis in original). While his predecessors had focused primarily on culture as a static system of relations, Turner develops a more fluid model where, at the interchange between different cultural fields, "paradigms are formulated, established, and come into conflict" ((Turner) 1974: 17). Tragedy can be thought of as occupying this dynamic space in between "stage drama" and "social drama." Greek tragedies were originally performed annually at the statesanctioned festival of the Great Dionysia in Athens. Tragedy derived financial support and cultural legitimacy from the city. But with their deviant and discomfiting messages, tragic performances also provided an inbuilt source of civic selfcritique.

Older, more traditional models of gender and character were still very much in play in contemporary democratic cultural institutions, such as the Athenian funeral oration (*epitaphios logos*). Death in battle was an event to be celebrated by the city. But there is something disconcerting, even grotesque, about a young woman or an old man taking up the heroic banner. Through such "unnatural" applications of the heroic code, Euripides calls into question both the ethics of civic selfsacrifice and the gender roles on which it is based. As a part of the "feedback" loop between the Great Dionysia and other institutions in Athens, the performances of deviant gender roles in Euripides have a cumulative, defamiliarizing effect. Tragedies, according to Turner's model, are not in any simple way representations or even idealizations of reality. They form part of a complex "figureeight" dynamic whereby the theater and the city are in constant dialogue. Gender is an important component of that conversation, with tragedies reinforcing, but at times also calling into question, heteronormative ideas of "male" and "female."

As my earlier discussion of *Medea* emphasized, to frame the issue of Medea's character in terms of "good" versus "bad" is to overlook the way in which the play itself calls into question the values by which its characters ask to be judged. In depicting Medea as a female Ajax, a woman whose heroic temper overrules her maternal instinct, Euripides was giving his audience more to mull over than the fact that she was a "bad" wife and mother. The play challenges its audience to rethink the foundations of their reasoning about the ethics of character—for both men and women. On the one hand, Medea shows her superb rhetorical mastery of the misogynistic proverbs depicting women as irrational creatures of passion; on the other hand, she fails to disprove such proverbs with her own actions. Having used her rhetorical skill to win back her husband's trust, only then to brutally kill his children, Medea in the end exemplifies some of the clichés with which Jason had earlier denounced her and the

female sex.

In his first extended verbal interchange with Medea, Jason proclaims that "you women have got into such a state of mind that, if your life at night is good, you think you have everything; but, if in that quarter things go wrong, you will consider your best and truest interests most hateful" (569–73). We may hear this as a baseless effort to dismiss Medea's carefully formulated claims to the reciprocal benefits of marriage. But their final dialogue casts Jason's earlier words in a different light. Medea has just mentioned the hubris of Jason's new marriage. In response Jason asks incredulously, with regard to their slain children, "And just for the sake of that you chose to kill them?" (1367). Safely out of reach in her grandfather's chariot, Medea tauntingly replies: "Is love so small a pain, do you think, for a woman?" (1368) How do we gauge Medea's tone here? Is she mocking Jason for his misogynistic platitudes? Or does she actually stand by the belief that for a woman, sex is everything? Are her words spoken with irony? Or with rage and contempt? Medea's character is full of contradictions: she exploits misogynistic stereotypes about women to manipulate the men around her. At the same time, she strives to be taken seriously by her former husband, and to win glory befitting a man. The representations of gendered roles and the role of gender in Euripides are challenging, multifaceted topics which elude neat summation. Today's readers, however, are in general less quick to jump to judgment, or to apply labels, than in years past. Rather than denouncing Medea as a "bad" woman, or celebrating Euripides as a protofeminist, we may be more inclined to enjoy the complexity and diversity of characters who populate his stage, and to appreciate that the often sophistic, always sophisticated handling of their gendered identities is a distinctive and provocative feature of Euripidean artistry.

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FURTHER READING

For an excellent introduction to key issues in interpreting gender in Euripides, see Mastronarde (2010, chapters 7 and 8). Important treatments of women and/or gender in tragedy include Foley (1981b), Goldhill (1986, chapter 5), Loraux (1987), Des Bouvrie (1990), Goff (1990), Seidensticker (1995), Bassi (1998), Wohl (1998), Ormand (1999), McClure (1999), Foley (2001), and Mendelsohn (2002). On gender in Greek literature and society, see Halperin (1990), Winkler (1990), Zeitlin (1996), Lardinois and McClure (2001), McClure (2002), and Holmes (2012). On tragic bodies, see Cawthorn (2008), Holmes (2010), and Worman (2012).

NOTES

1 On the myths of Prometheus and Pandora in Hesiod, see Vernant (1981: 183–201) and Zeitlin (1996: 53–86).

2 Lefkowitz (1981: 88–104 and 163–9 provides an introduction to and translation of Euripides' *Vita*; see also Kovacs' (1994) collection of the ancient sources for the life of Euripides (in Greek with facing English translations).

3 See also Foley's (1982) cogent response to Shaw.

4 Gayle Rubin's (1975) classic analysis of the "the traffic in women" supplies the theoretical groundwork for the readings of marriage in Greek tragedy as a homosocial institution in Ormand (1999:14–18), Rabinowitz (1993: 21–22), and Wohl (1998: 18–22, 128–31). See also Lyons (2012: 77–90) on gender and exchange in tragedy.

5 See Wohl (2005) for a reading of the *Bacchae* that problematizes the Oedipal logic of sexual difference.

PART VII
Reception

CHAPTER 33
Euripides, Aristophanes, and the Reception of "Sophistic" Styles

Nancy Worman

Sophists and other "quacks" have a bad reputation in Attic Old comedy. In Aristophanes' *Clouds* the newfangled sophistic education renders young men louche, languid, and prone to like Euripides; a fragment of Cratinus addresses those who have dived into a "nest of sophists" (2.1); and in Eupolis' *Flatterers*, a group that includes Protagoras and Socrates' associate Chaerephon, sophists are boasters and idling prattlers (fr. 157; cf. frs. 352, 353 KA; cf. Aristophanes *Clouds* 102, 449, 1492; see Carey (2000)). Their wordsmithing and wisdom hawking activities implicitly associate them with the agora, where demagogues, market women, and other lowlife hucksters (*agoraioi*) go busying about their banausic tasks (e.g., Aristophanes *Knights* 218, *Peace* 750, *Lysistrata* 457, *Frogs* 1015). For Aristophanes most of these features and a few notable others come to a point around the figure of Euripides, whose comic character uniquely captures the range of associations that runs from overly clever wordmongering to a feminizing focus on the stuff of life: clothes, food, sex. Indeed, as David Roselli has pointed out, in *Acharnians* Dicaeopolis' borrowing of Euripides' props suggests that the poet's own "stuff" (i.e., the components of his plots and style) can be reduced to common items accumulated like goods in the marketplace (*Acharnians* 430–79; Roselli (2005) 22–23). This is, of course, what the comic idiom does to all conceptual concerns—namely, renders them as the detritus of daily life, as *Frogs* famously dramatizes in relation to poetry. But for Aristophanes at least, Euripides has a special relationship to such effects, since it is he above all who made of tragedy a ragged, pedestrian affair.

Aristophanes may have been alone in devoting entire plays to rhetoric, sophists (or "sophists"[1]), and education (*Banqueters*, two versions of *Clouds*); and while he is not the only comic poet to lampoon Socrates as a sophistic quack, he is unique in the extent of his fascination with Euripides. Other comic poets targeted Euripides as a clever type and/or associated him with Socrates (e.g., Kratinos 307 KA; Teleclides frs. 39–40 KA; Strattis fr. 1 KA), but Aristophanes' level of commitment to lampooning this tragic poet appears to be singular.[2] Three of Aristophanes' extant plays bring him on stage (*Acharnians*, *Thesmophorizusae*, and *Frogs*); and many others engage with his plots and stylistic tendencies. The comic fragments suggest further engagement, with scattered phrases characterizing Euripides' clever style and/or connecting him with the sophists (e.g., frs. 376, 471, 580, 638 KA). This unusually sustained focus on a fellow poet affords us singular access to a complex phenomenon. The accretion of distinct details offers up Euripides' comic profile as a unique assemblage, the broad range of which opens out onto the later reception of "sophists" as a group associated with an eclectic set of stylistic tendencies.

This chapter explores how Aristophanes' multifaceted mockery of Euripides, and especially

his use of gendered innuendo, colors the treatment of the tragic poet's style and those of related figures in the plays. In Aristophanic comedy metaphors targeting the appetites—especially sexual—isolate particular styles of speech and writing at the slighter, softer end of things (see Worman (2008) chapter 2). Certain appetites come to be predicated of certain "sophists," a loose group that in comedy seems to range from, say, the tragic poets Agathon and Euripides to the philosopher Socrates, or at least his students and followers. Further, two really striking turns shape the reception of this imagery. First, these metaphorical intersections contribute to a burgeoning literary critical tradition whose closeshaving, subtle practices themselves occupy the slighter end of the stylistic spectrum. Second, such modes are subsumed in later tradition as the "soft and shady" middle style purveyed by Greek sophists and philosophers idling in the garden. For Cicero and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, these Greek styles are smooth, fluid, and vaguely effeminate, rather than properly vigorous and exercised. Thus in the stylistic continuum that from Aristophanes on runs from forceful, lofty, and "grand" (*megaloprepēs*, *deinotēs*) to slight and "thin" (*ischnos*, *leptos*), Euripides and his fellow wordpolishers start out at the slighter end of things but end up in later reception somewhere in the soft and fluid middle.

In Attic comedy sophists of this type (labeled *sophistai* or just *sophoi*) are associated with styles that encompass both the refined and the rather elaborate, encapsulating Euripidean polish, Socratic small talk, and Agathon's flowery mode. That said, some of Agathon's modes also resemble those of the sophist Gorgias, famous for his elaborate, chiming styles, so that thingrand distinctions do not dovetail in any clear way with the "soft sophist" category (see O'Sullivan (1992) 130–34; Worman (2002) 151–54). Although in comedy the stylistic and bodily inclinations of this style are often metaphorized at the assend (via terms like *euruprôktos*, *katapugōn*, etc.), it is difficult to glean a single coherent stylistic category from the modes that these words indicate, including those that are subtle, chatty, and fine. That said, all of them constitute what we might call (following Kenneth Dover's piquant vocabulary) a bumsy style (Dover (1978) 75). Most of these "sophistic" styles are mocked as soft, effeminate, and submissive—or (less commonly, and like demagogues' styles) as voracious, swaggering, and gaping. These modes signal appetitive needs relating to the various brands of selfprostitution in which poets, sophists, and politicians indulge; accordingly, they are all opposed to chaste, upright, closebodied practices, although representatives of the latter are sparse in comedy (but cf. Aristophanes *Clouds* 1009–14, for example).

The ancient comic images are quite gleefully obscene in their metonymies; and those that mark out certain sophists also peg them directly to gender references. By way of framing and (I hope) clarifying Euripides' particular proclivities as opposed to those like him, I take as my starting point some crucial insights from two of Froma Zeitlin's most influential articles: "Travesties of Gender and Genre in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*," and "Playing the Other: Theater, Theatricality, and the Feminine in Greek Drama." First, if Euripides' place in the mimetic and stylistic scheme of things is somewhat feminized, as Zeitlin concludes in the piece on *Women at the Thesmophoria*, Agathon and Socrates hold down either end of the gendered spectrum that Aristophanes and Plato fashion between them. Zeitlin points out toward the end of "Playing the Other" that Aristophanes depicts Agathon as the truly effeminate poet and that in Plato's *Symposium* he serves as the flowery representative of tragedy. Socrates, on

the other hand, while he subsumes the feminine as the philosophical midwife in the *Symposium*, is a figure of manly endurance (Zeitlin ([1985] 1996) 372–73).

At the end of "Travesties of Gender and Genre" (Zeitlin ([1981] 1996) 327) remarks, "In this 'feminization' of Greek culture, Euripides was, above all, a pioneer, and Aristophanes perhaps correctly perceived that Euripides' place was indeed with the women". This statement concludes Zeitlin's recognition that Euripides' style is romantic and bound up with mimesis and illusion, which (as she stresses) are representational practices that are feminized in the archaic and classical imaginary. As *Frogs* in particular suggests, this romantic coloration also often abuts the pastoral—that is, flowering, meadowland spaces associated with Aphrodite, where lovers and other idlers may reside. These spaces represent the other feminine arena along the urban–rural divide, so that Euripides sophistic type is pegged, in ways that can seem paradoxical, to both women haggling in the agora and girls cavorting in the fields. As I discuss in more detail below, later critics effectively disambiguate this confounding combination to distinguish broader categories of style and sensibility. To put it in overly brief and provisional terms, in the critical and rhetorical tradition pallid, tender (Greek) sophists and philosophers languish in shaded gardens and parkland spaces, while manly (Roman) orators work out their prose in the glaring sun of agora and forum.

In what follows I first situate the Aristophanic depictions of Euripides' style in relation to his two adjacent "sophists" Socrates and Agathon, in order to elucidate in more detail his signature modes. I then explore the overlaps between Euripides' actual style and Aristophanes' lampooning of it, both of which influence the later reception of the tragic poet's style as soft and somewhat feminine. Finally, I offer a few indications of the later reception of "sophistic" styles and where Euripides fits in this scheme.

1 Euripides, Agathon, and the Bumsy Style

For Aristophanes, Euripides' style is "sophistic" insofar as it is colored by recent philosophical fads (cf. Socrates in *Clouds*); it is feminized because it either leans too much toward "women's" plots involving exotic locales and romantic devices or diminishes the lofty register of tragedy by dragging it through bedroom and marketplace. This style is also "bumsy" in that its chatty, lounging appeal encourages idle talk in the marketplace to the detriment of more manly activities. In *Frogs* Euripides may claim for his style light and fine measures as well as technical effects (954–58), but his vocabulary suggests an unmanly softness and flexibility on the one hand and a crafty (sophistic) knowingness on the other. Aeschylus disdains Euripides' poetry as overly refined, while both it and the poet are "utterly sat on" by Aphrodite (1046); its very polish and charm intimates a feminizing erotics that is very different from the manly bluster of the older poet. In keeping with this overly smooth, feminine mode, Euripides teaches the practice of chatter and gossip (*lalia*, *stômulia*), which empties the wrestling rings and wears down the rumps of gossipy youths (1069–71; cf. 92). Similarly in *Clouds* the idle quibbling inspired by the Weaker Argument, whose instruction leads one to love Euripides, fills the baths and agora with chattering young men and empties the wrestling schools (1053; cf. *Clouds* 1003).

Euripides' poetry, in this conception at any rate, exhibits the kind of polished verbiage and decadent attitudes that the soft and idle young are depicted as admiring most. Further, this style is repeatedly sexualized in relation to the body's apertures, not only the anus but most essentially the mouth. In *Frogs*, when Aeschylus and Euripides are about to engage in the contest to determine who might best save the city, the Chorus calls the sophistic Euripides a "mouthworker" (στοματουργός, 826). They describe his tongue as smooth (826–27), and declare that he is a verb shaver and subtle wordreckoner (828). The bold and blustering Aeschylus adds to this imagery by deeming his opponent a "gossip gatherer" (841), a label that more directly associates Euripides with women's chatter. Jon Hesk ((2007) 135–37, 154–56) argues that such name calling is evidence of "fishwife" insults, which is to say evocative of both marketplace banter and sophistic discourse.

As Neil O'Sullivan has recognized ((1992) 19–20, 131–33), in Aristophanes *lalia* ("chatter") and the related term *stômulia* ("wordiness") characterize Euripides, Socrates, the sophists, and their students. This focus on the mouth obviously conjoins verbal and sexual activities; the idea that the inveterate prattler may also be openmouthed in other ways shows up repeatedly in the imagery of Aristophanes, and not just in relation to Euripides. One can be a mouth worker by engaging in polished chatter or outright feminine styles (as Agathon does in *Women at the Thesmophoria*, for example) and by pandering like an agile politician (as the Sausage Seller does in *Knights*). Both of these suggest the mouth's parallel role in sexual servicing, so that the speaker who inclines too much toward chat rather than sport appears effeminate and receptive.

In *Frogs* Euripides indicates that his sense of his own abilities centers on the pliable mouth: when he prays before the contest, he invokes among other things the "hinge of the tongue" (892). But in Aristophanes' depiction, the flexibility that Euripides seeks implies not only smooth, supple talk but also physical pliability and an unmanly ineffectuality. In *Knights* the timid slave whom some manuscripts call "Nicias" (after the cautious Athenian general) coins a special term for this mode, when seeking a way to control his master Demos. "How," he despairs, "can I possibly speak with Euripidean polish?" (18). He says he has no guts (17), and can only devise an escape from his circumstances by wordplay that makes use of the rhythm of masturbation (25; cf. 21–26).

Despite an intermittent focus on the comic phallus, the Aristophanic depiction of this mode is, again, largely poised between mouth and ass. In *Clouds* the sophistic Weaker Argument claims that the tongue is the primary organ that young Athenians should learn to exercise (1058–59). This, he argues, will give Pheidippides access to all kinds of sensory pleasures associated with the symposium—boys, women, games, fancy foods, drink, and laughter (1073)—because in their pursuit he will be protected by his ability to use his mouth defensively, should he get caught out in some indiscretion (1076–82). When the Stronger Argument points out that clever talk will do little to fend off the mortifying punishments exacted on the adulterer (e.g., having a radish shoved up one's anus, 1083), the Weaker Argument questions whether being "gape assed" (εὐρύπρωκτος) is such a bad thing (1085). In a lampoon of Socratic elenchus, he then forces his opponent to admit that most of the city's leaders possess this physical trait, including

lawyers, tragic poets, demagogues, and theatergoers, many of whom he knows (1088–1100). Defeated, the Stronger Argument throws down his cloak and runs off with the other "bumsies" (κινούμενοι, 1102).

The figure of Agathon in *Women at the Thesmophoria* shows a similar vulnerability at both ends. Early on in the play Agathon's servant comes out of the poet's house and announces pompously to Euripides and his old relative that the younger poet is in the process of "twisting new ties of words," turning some and welding others, as well as "rolling and casting" them (52–57). Although this vocabulary clearly references crafts such as boatbuilding and statue making, the gleefully crude relative finishes the image with a verb that likely indicates oral or anal penetration (λαικα&c.acute;ζει) (57; see Henderson [1975] (1991) 153; Jocelyn (1980)). He declares that he will "roll and twist" both the poet and his servant around and "cast in this here penis" (61–62; see Foley (2000) on such uses of the comic phallus). That is to say, the relative transfers the images of twisting and rolling onto the poet himself, so that the scene confirms that how one talks can be effectively read on the body, via one's physical inclinations. Later, in response to Agathon's girlish trilling and feminine dress, the relative deems the poet both "gapeholed" (ευ&c.comabr;ρ ύπρωκτος) and "allass" (κατα&c.acute;πυγον) not merely in his words but also in his experiences (200–01).

2 Socrates and Euripides

Socrates does not really fit this pattern. In Aristophanes' multifaceted portrayal there is something brutal about the more manly end of this "sophistic" style. When Strepsiades finally does succeed in persuading his son to undertake Socrates' instruction, he creates a monster with a penchant for steamy Euripidean plots, who beats his father and defends his actions with dialectical tricks borrowed from the Weaker Argument. The vocabulary that both characters use to pick out Euripidean poetry points to its newness and cleverness, as well as its paradoxical combination of tender charms and cruel dictates. Spurning his father's archaic penchant for Aeschylus' bombast, he delights in his knowledge of "delicate phrases, words, and thoughts" and of how to teach brutality toward one's parent (1404–05). Thus this style would seem to have violent ethical extrapolations; indulgence in glib talk, sexy plots, and clever argument turns out to be corrupting, since it liberates one too fully to do what one pleases, as the Weaker Argument boasts in *Clouds*.

For Aristophanes such behavior is largely both Euripides' and Socrates' fault, but this only reduplicates the complexity of the attributes associated with idling intellectuals. To return to Zeitlin's summing up in the *Women at the Thesmophoria* piece, she also concludes that while Euripides place was "with the women," "that of Socrates in *Clouds* was with the men" ((1996) 327). Socrates' "sophistic" mode in Aristophanes is in fact quite distinct. He himself is something of a tough guy; the education he advocates may make one pallid and openassed, and he may share these and other "twisting" features with other sophists, but he swaggers barefoot and scowling in the streets (*Clouds* 361–63). Socrates' training, according to the enthusiastic Strepsiades, achieves a slew of unsavory traits, rendering his acolytes, among other things, bold (*thrasus*), smooth talking (*euglottos*), and supple (445–50). One of these

traits does seem to mark Socrates' students on view. Earlier Strepsiades comes upon them while they are bent over studying the ground and scanning the skies with their anuses (193; cf. *Birds* 441–43). The posture manifestly apes the "bumsy" mode and certainly indicates one way in which one might be flexible. Boldness and *euglossia*, on the other hand, are traits shared by the brash, sashaying Sausage Seller in *Knights* (e.g., *Eq*. 837; 637–38), who performs tricks with his ass (e.g., 424–28, 638–42) and outfoxes his blustering opponent Paphlagon (cf. Wohl (2002) chapter 2).

3 Styles and "Styles"

This is all very entertaining, but it does not necessarily tell us much about what the styles of these "sophists" are actually like. The point here is not, of course, only how we might describe Euripide' actual style, or that of Socrates or Agathon; rather, I am interested in how the combined effects of their modes (insofar as indications of these exist or are extant) and the depictions of these modes by other writers influence their receptions. For Socrates we have only these depictions, of course, but they all shape a fairly consistent portrait of a small talking, mockmodest interlocutor, which is at least in keeping with some stylistic inclinations at the "thinner" end of the continuum (see Worman (2008) chapter 4). The most dominant comic attributes of this mode are slightness and subtlety, captured largely by the term *leptos*, as well as the embodying of it in its pallid purveyors (see O'Sullivan (1992) 137 on its use in the *Clouds*). This slight style shares features with those of the "sophistic" Euripides and Agathon, but theirs contribute more fully feminizing details to its repertoire.

The signature indications in Aristophanes and Plato of Agathon's style delimit a rather elaborate mode, one that is flowery, feminine, and tenderly selfregarding. I have mentioned the relevant details of the Aristophanic Agathon; these are slyly echoed in Plato's *Symposium*, which portrays Agathon's speech on Eros as adorned with poetic references, delicate imagery, and specious sophistic reasoning (*Symposium* 194e3–197e8; see EmlynJones (2004) 395). More essential, the speech depicts Love as beautiful, young, delicate, soft, and belonging among the flowers (195a5–196b3). This is a match for Agathon only in the coyest sense (who is likely in his early 30s by 416); but it promotes the style of his speech as soft and flowery—a veritable *locus amoenus* of effeminizing indications. Softness is particularly emphasized in Plato's mocking ventriloquism: Agathon uses the words *hapalos* (tender, soft) and *malakos* (soft) a total of fifteen times in about as many lines. At the end of the speech, he declares Eros the father of "luxury, daintiness, delicacy, charms, desire, and longing" (197d6–7), as if glossing his own mode. While the accuracy of such depictions is difficult to determine from the sorry cluster of fragments remaining from Agathon's poetry, most of those preserved point to a style marked by a chiming, antithetical mode that owes much to the famously elaborate innovations of the sophist Gorgias (Rhys Roberts (1900)). Such features would seem to point to the "grander" end of the stylistic spectrum, but since the fragments resemble most a collection of nearrhyming maxims, they may mislead in their stylistic emphasis (Emlyn Jones (2004) 394). In fact, the consistency of Aristophanes' and Plato's imagery, as well as that of its reception, suggests that Agathon was generally regarded as a beautiful, softly

"boyish" man who composed in a finely crafted, charming style that shares more traits with Euripides' modes than with grander styles (cf. Rhys Roberts (1900) 51, who cites Aristotle *Poetics* 1456a25–32 and Plato *Symposium* 196e1–3).

Beyond his association with Agathon, Euripides' style exhibits many elements that would have themselves contributed to its being taken as slight and womanly. Content alone points in this direction: his emphasis on the body and its features, his highlighting of the female or feminized body in particular, his interest in representing typical lives and characterizing affective states, plus his frequent choral combinations of exotic or pastoral settings and tender young women all likely contributed to this reception. If we set such tendencies beside the polished urbanity, sophistic subtleties, and modulated delicacy of Euripides' semantic, lexical, and metrical choices, and recognize that Aristophanes' comic portraits combine all of these various elements, we can begin to see how they might eventually work toward transforming a variegated cluster of received imagery into more fixed and influential stylistic designations.

In *Frogs* Euripides famously lays claim to slimming down the fat lady that was tragedy by putting her on a diet of little works, walks, white beets, and juice pressed from slender, chatty books (941–43; see O'Sullivan (1992) 13538). But what does this "slender" style in fact look like? Richard Hunter has recently argued that Euripides engages what he terms a "practical" mimesis—that is, one taken up with literary critical and sophistic questions and bent on testing and checking ((2009) 20–21). This is also related to what makes the styles of Euripides and Socrates appear less than manly: the critical measuring, itself an activity that mimes familiar diurnal affairs (e.g., weighing and counting in the marketplace or home), is effectively domesticating, even feminizing.

Again, it may well be not only this lowly "day in the life" mimetic inclination that marks Euripides' style, but also his more highly colored and modulated choral turns on pastoral spaces, which are absorbed into the tradition as representing flowery, polished styles. The Chorus in the *Bacchae*, for example, offers a dreamy depiction of the faroff space of Aphrodite's Cyprus, "where Loves dwell, enchanters of human minds, and Paphos which the hundredmouthed flows of the foreign river waters without rain" (404–08). This is a Euripidean "escapeprayer," as Dodds points out (*ad loc*.), in which the Chorus envisions an elsewhere at the edges of the Greek world (e.g., *Hippolytus* 732–51, *Helen* 1478–86). While Dodds claims, by way of explaining what Aphrodite is doing in the ode, that such spaces of repose often conjoin Aphrodite, the Graces, and desire, the examples he gives are from Aristophanes (*Acharnians* 989, *Peace* 455). Thus we might go further and say that Euripides and Aristophanes share a penchant for these visions of faroff and usually bucolic places, wistful alternatives to the beleaguered and corrupting city.

Compare the ode from Euripides' *Medea* celebrating Athens, in which some slightly different but adjacent associations are forged. This ode brings the pastoral imagery closer to home, depicting a luminous sensual space in a style that is similarly shimmering (*Med*. 824–44):

Erechtheus' offspring were prosperous of old,
both children of the blessed gods and from
a holy, indomitable land, grazing
on most renown wisdom, and always
stepping gently through the gleaming air,
where once they say the nine Pierian Muses
planted golden Harmonia; and by
the streams of the lovelyrushing Cephisus
they proclaim that Aphrodite, drawing water,
breathes sweetscented, cooling gusts of wind
over the land; and that always crowning her
hair with a fragrant wreath of rosy flowers,
she sends Lovers—companions of Wisdom
and helpers in every sort of virtue.

This florid style captures not only Aphrodite and her setting (a soft, scented *locus amoenus*); it also affects a quasiPindaric but more lucid mode, complete with a meter to match (dactylo epitrite). To further complicate matters, this scene calls up the spaces of the Academy, situated on the banks of the Cephisus where lovers are companions of wisdom. This is a place of erotically charged contemplation and conversation, one that in its riverbank setting anticipates, perhaps most tellingly, that of Plato's *Phaedrus*. While the *Phaedrus* is staged along the Ilissos, which flowed just south of the city walls (where some scholars also locate the temple of "Aphrodite in the Gardens"), the Cephisus is the river that ran past the Academy. In *Clouds* the Stronger Argument depicts the Academy as a space of dreamy parkland play, where young men disport themselves under flowering trees (1005–08). In this vision, the Academy is an older, traditional space for the training of young men—as opposed to the shadowy corners of the agora (991–94), in which the pale, unexercised youth raised by Socrates and Euripides chatter. Plato seriously confounds such oppositions when in the *Phaedrus* he depicts Socrates as a denizen of the urban setting who nevertheless seeks wisdom, initially in a form resembling Pindaric transport, along the flowering, shady riverbank.

In *Frogs*, however, Aristophanes' own pastoral schemes are plenty confounding. *Frogs* appears also to be staged, at least on one level, along the Ilissos (Hooker (1960); cf. Slater (1986)). When Dionysus crosses the marsh and the Frog Chorus parades its pastoral, Ur poetic status, the journey also dramatizes points along the path to the space of literary judgment. The Frogs' marsh is, for instance, beloved of the Muses (227) and fosters the reeds that make the instruments of Pan and Apollo (229–34). The setting of the Chorus' song and indeed of its claims is patently bucolic: the reeds go to make the shepherd's pipes of the

woodland Pan and Apollo's phorminx, the instrument that Hermes made from a tortoise that he found outside the door of his mountain home (*Homeric Hymn to Hermes* 47). But curiously, these rustic indicators are also suggestive of Euripides, who is represented later in *Frogs* as essentially urban. First, the song that the Frogs sing metrically resembles Euripides' preference for simple iambs and trochees, with a high degree of resolution and some "lekythia" endings (as Parker has noticed (1997) 465–66). Second, both of the Frogs' strophes contain echoes of Euripidean choral odes, and one depicts the Frogs' style as overly modulated like that of Euripides and other purveyors of the "new music."

I want to consider this cluster of effects in more detail. It is an odd mix, with its little sing song endings for which Aeschylus will later tease Euripides, as finishing off his iambs with domestic ditties: "a little sack, little bottle, little fleece" (1203–04). Some scholars have seen a sexual joke here, one more suggestion in this play full of them that Euripides' style is lacking in manly force (e.g., Dover *ad loc*.; O'Sullivan (1992) 110, 150). But this apparently feeble, domesticated meter also shapes a marshy poetics that has as its tutelary deities in the Muses, Apollo, and the horned Pan, playing on his reedy pipes. The spatially significant nature of this claim to poetic authority echoes that of choral odes that gesture toward young women's rites of passage, violent or otherwise. This situating of a particular song type is especially vibrant in odes from Euripides' *Ion* (492–505) and *Iphigenia in Taurus* (1125–31) that describe ritual spaces on the slopes of the Acropolis. In the first Pan is piping, the daughters of Aglauros are dancing and singing on green courses, and there are caves associated with Pan and Apollo. The topography described is that of the Acropolis, the area below the Erechtheion on the north slope, where there were in fact caves dedicated to Pan and Apollo and a sanctuary of Aglauros (cf. *Ion* 936–38), as well as of Aphrodite (Wycherley (1978) 176–79). We can compare also a strophe from *Iphigenia in Tauris*, which invokes the woodland, piping Pan (with his wax bound reed) and Apollo with his echoing seventoned lyre, both deployed as the Athenian welcoming committee—as facilitating, like the Frogs, passage to and from Athens.

The second strophe of the Frogs' ode, which is again a mix of trochees, iambs, and lekythia, furthers the impression that we are meant to think of Euripides in a "pastoral," light, and lively guise, since it depicts the style of the Frogs' song as one of "many diving melodies," "sparkling dance," (cf. the "sparkling" hymnic shouts at *Ion* 499), and multibubblings (244–49). Most of these elements point to an overly modulated style—one that resembles those featured in the "new music" of the dithyrambic poets Timotheus and Kinesias, as well as Euripides' later lyrics (Defradas (1969); Campbell (1984); Moorton (1989) 313–14; Csapo (2004)). Critics of this new style (including Aristophanes) depict it as decadent and effeminizing; in combination with settings suggestive of pastoral erotics, these bubbly melodies contribute to the impression of a nimble, absurdly mobile mode. This impression also conforms with the acting styles that Euripides' plays encourage. As Roselli (2005) points out, the critic Demetrius uses Euripides' *Ion* as the prime example of poetry that demands mobile staging, since the first actor would have to leap about the stage, sweeping and chasing off the birds (*On Style* 195).

4 Literary Critical Practices and Places

How is it possible for one's style to be associated with both urban/urbane mouthworking and a pastoral femininity? As I suggest briefly above, one answer might lie in the burgeoning literary critical practices of the late fifth century, for indications of which we must again start with Aristophanes. The *Frogs* depicts Euripides not only as a polished, chatty "mouth worker"; the vocabulary associated with his style also points to practices that are clearly literary critical and in fact imbedded in the very judging activities that the play orchestrates. Thus before Aeschylus and Euripides emerge onstage, the Hades houseslave informs Xanthias that the judging will include weighing and measuring, since, he notes, "Euripides says that tragedies must be tested word for word" (801–02). When, just before the two dramatists appear, the Chorus first introduces their styles of engagement, they envision Euripides as a feminine "tester of words" (βασανίστρια), a shaver of phrases who delicately parses his opponent's "great labor of lungs" (826–29).

This kind of activity lies at the core of literary critical practices, insofar as we can discern them in the fragmentary evidence of sophists and poets of the late fifth century. And indeed, as Matthew Wright (2010) has pointed out, Euripides' own work represents a central part of the process by which tragedy contributed to the emerging discussion. In this discursive development the disparate aesthetic and ethical assessments of archaic and classical poets developed into a more coherent set of debates among sophists and other philosophical types, including poets like Euripides and Aristophanes. Wright argues that Euripides is, contrary to ancient and modern notions of his stylistic adventurousness, in fact quite conservative in his literary critical views. What matters for our purposes, however, is that from more culturally and aesthetically conservative perspectives, this critical activity itself is radical, since it seeks to investigate in some intellectually "testing" manner what precisely goes into the making of good poetry. In *Frogs*, whatever styles Euripides may himself deploy, the old Aeschylus finds his finetuned, overly rational (read: literary critical) mode anathema to good composition. The tools of such critical practices aim at adjudication and delineation of what earlier, more traditional poetics cast as necessarily elusive, mysterious, and divine. They are thus (at least from this angle) deflationary in nature and easy to lampoon as such, given how thin and ineffectual, say, logical precision must look in comparison to the mountains of metaphors that grand styles of poets like Pindar and Aeschylus pile up.

Interestingly enough, some reactions to literary critical activities target not only Euripides but also Aristophanes himself. In a fragment that scholars have attributed to his older rival Cratinus, the speaker lampoons Aristophanes' style by isolating it with the overly refined intellectualizing of Euripides and coining a suitably extravagant participle to capture their joint mode ("subtletyparsing, maximpursuing, Euripidaristophanizing," *inc. fab.* fr. 342; see Ruffell (2002) 160; also Biles (2002)). That is, Cratinus' rambunctious mockery suggests that both poets participate in the types of careful, wordparsing styles that suit these critical practices. And while these would seem, by virtue of their "weights and measures" metaphors, to be practices associated with the agora and city activities, in *Frogs* Aristophanes places them in the countryside—along the Ilissos and in the marshes south of the city walls and/or on the road to Eleusis (Hooker (1960), Slater (1986)). Why would this be? If the *Phaedrus*, which is staged in the former locale, offers any indication, the answer lies in the developing contentions

among literary critics, rhetoricians, and philosophers about which practices have or ought to have civic benefits and which involve a withdrawal from the city and its possibly corrupting concerns. It is here, I think, that we can locate the beginnings of the philosophical retreat to the garden. Poetry may in comic representation still be called upon for its civic wisdom, but the practices by which its own value is assessed have less apparent civic applications. Attempts to reinvigorate an awareness of the power of poetry may involve a return to the country and to pastoral settings of inspiration and authority, but in Aristophanes and Plato alike these settings have very ambiguous effects on critical judgment. Thus Euripides and his softy reputation came to be associated with both the deflationary, closeshaving measures of the agora and the feminized, ineffectual spaces of ritual and contemplation beyond the city walls.

5 Euripides, Plato, and Later Reception

This association of "soft" inclinations with a loose group of intellectuals is quite sustained in later tradition, although the imagery there emphasizes more the connections between bodies and their settings (see further in Worman (2015)). The comic metonymies are absorbed into the rhetorical tradition, initially by way of Plato and Xenophon as well as the orators, especially in relation to ideas about style, of both life and speech. In fourthcentury oratory the label "sophist" often indicates the deceitful, crafted knowingness of the professional as opposed to the amateur but upright citizen (e.g., Aeschines 1.125, 2.180; Demosthenes 19.250). Xenophon also associates the sophist with mercenary activities, particularly those of the *pornos* (*Memorabilia* 1.6.13); and in Plato's dialogues Socrates lampoons such types as generally artful and appetitive. But again, Socrates and his followers are poised in curious relationship to this cluster of affects. In the *Symposium*, for example, Socrates' admirer Apollodorus is teased by his interlocutor as a tough critic of others, which, he remarks, would seem to belie his reputation for being soft (μαλακο&c.acute;ς, 173d4–8). Although Plato and later writers love to quote the clever sayings of Euripides—and indeed he appears to be many critics' favorite *sophos*—his style had a similarly ambiguous cast.[3] For Aristotle, Euripides is the master of a smooth, covert style, one that makes use of ordinary conversation and thus "conceals [artifice] well" (κλέπτεται ευ&c.comabr;˜, *Rhet*. 1404b24–25; cf. 1408b5–6). A Hellenistic epigram sometimes attributed to Archimelus (fl. 3rd c.) warns a fellow poet off of Euripides' "impassable path," which, though "smooth and wellpounded," is "harsher than a sharp stake" (*Epigr*. 7.50). The vocabulary sounds oddly sexual in its implications, even as it frames the famous (and more benign) trope of the "path of words."

The curious twist on the sexual innuendoes associated with Euripides and Socrates takes shape in Plato by means of contrasts between Socrates and other sophists that often map dispositions in spatial terms. In the *Gorgias* Socrates notoriously dismisses dramatic poetry and rhetoric as playing to large crowds in public arenas, but then later is lampooned by Callicles as an idler and a softy who avoids the public spaces of manly contention and who could not defend himself properly in court (485e7–486b1; cf. 491b4). In the *Lysis* Socrates meets up with some young acquaintances by Panops' spring, as he is walking along the road under the city walls from the Academy to the Lyceum; he is persuaded to follow them into a new wrestling school

full of beautiful teenagers and there argues that philosophical dialogue (rather than poetry and encomia) is the best way to get the boy. In the *Phaedrus* his pursuit of the proper rhetorical style takes him outside of the city walls, so that the discussion is adumbrated literally and figuratively by the redolent trees and soft grasses beside the flowing waters of the Ilissos. This turns out to be some very influential shade: the sophist and philosopher fall together in later tradition, as those whose styles affectively call up languishing in flowering meadows or under sheltering trees. This is especially evident in Cicero and his roughly contemporary literary critic Dionysius of Halicarnassus, where the soft, shadeloving, idling Greek philosopher/sophist is opposed to the Roman orator, a tough guy who exercises his muscular style in the sun.

For Cicero, this "philosophical" style is a middling one that aims at calming rather than exciting the spirit and addresses tranquil topics in order to teach rather than captivate (*Orator* 63; cf. *Brutus* 121). He deems the mode "soft and shady" (*mollis est · · · et umbratilis*), a characterization that wryly echoes both the *Phaedrus*' pleasant setting and the soft and shady training that Plato, with a nod at Aristophanes' lampoon of Socrates, derides in the *Phaedrus* (cf. *Phdr*. 239c5–d1). In the *Brutus* Cicero depicts the similarly fluid, sweet style of the fourthcentury rhetor Demetrius of Phaleron as also more suited to the gym than battle, and as coming directly from "the shadows of Theophratus" rather than the soldier's tent (37–38).

The calm, sweet flow of this middle style, pleasant though it is, turns out to smack of too much polish and charm. Cicero portrays it as a product of the philosophical schools and the sophists' "springs" (*Orator* 96). Later in the *Orator* he contrasts this excessive fluidity with the "muscle" that more stringent modes adopt. Speech that flows like a river without the natural syncopation that results from adherence to rhythm resembles a man untrained in the palaestra. It is similarly slack, without forward movement or force (228–29; cf. 186–87).

In *On Composition* Dionysius deploys a comparable cluster of images. He characterizes this middle style as polished and "flowery" (*On Composition* 23.1; cf. 22.35), attributing it to (among others) Sappho and Euripides. It has precisely the flowing and soft qualities lacking in its opposite (23.100). It is also marked by euphony, as well as a vocabulary that is smooth, soft, and "virginal" (23.16–17). In keeping with this pastoral, vaguely feminizing scene, both Isocrates' and Plato's periodic rhythms and lexical choices are depicted as resembling flowing water: Isocrates' is a meandering river while Plato's has the fresh flow of a spring and the sweet smell of a flowering meadow.

Dionysius contrasts Plato's tactics with those of his stylistic hero Demosthenes by means of a set of telling similes that, like Cicero's characterization of the "soft and shady" style, come straight out of Socrates' first speech in the *Phaedrus*. The techniques of the orator are as different, Dionysius declares, as "real from ceremonial weapons, actual sights from images, bodies trained by labors in the sun from those pursuing ease in the shade" (32.4–7). Dionysius follows up his denigration of these shade lovers by opposing the "flowery meadow offering pleasant rest" that characterizes Plato's style to the "rich and fertile field" of Demosthenes' (*Demosthenes* 32.10–15). The one offers a perfumed but transient entertainment, the other lacks neither the true sustenance of the farmer's welltended plot nor its luxuries. Dionysius

sets up these contrasts not only to disdain the philosopher's shady retreat, but also, again like Cicero, to imply that it harbors a feminizing disinclination for the tough labors of oratory. The fact that this trope of the pallid, idling sophist from Aristophanes' *Clouds* and *Frogs* is sustained by these later writers speaks to its continuing centrality as a flashpoint for aesthetic and ethical conflicts between the hardbody qualities of oratory and the languid philosophical remove. Although Euripides now shares the stage with Plato and other "sophistic" softies, the distinctive terms are quite similar to those that Aristophanes deploys to frame his favorite target as a supple, feminine word polisher.

The mysterious critic "Longinus," perhaps writing in the second century CE, is less overtly bodyoriented in his imagery; but he also indicates his sense of Euripides' style as residing at the softer, weaker, and definitely less sublime end of the continuum. While discussing the use of visualization, he approves of the poet's occasional vaults into poetic heights, but he makes clear that this is not Euripides' normal mode (*On the Sublime* 15.2, 15.4). Rather, when the poet attempts to vie with Aeschylus' grandeur, he "softens down" the image (15.6). Euripides excels at envisioning madness and love, and is better at this than others; but in order to achieve grandeur, he must goad his own nature like the wounded lion in Homer (*Iliad* 20.170–71; *On the Sublime* 15.4). Associating Euripides with madness, love, or both is an old game, and one not only restricted to Aristophanes. The fourthcentury orator Aeschines cites the "wise Euripides" (*Against Timarchus* 151.1–2) as an authority on love, although of a prudent kind, while the Cynic philosopher and poet Cercidas credits Euripides with advice on how to ride out love's storm, successfully navigating the "wayward squalls of desire" (fr. 5.10).

As Zeitlin remarks when discussing Aristophanes' manipulation of Euripides' character in *Women at the Thesmophoria*, "[F]eminization first unmans those whom the culture would scorn and abuse, the ones it would lay open to aggressive violence, and finds this sexual slander the convenient point of entry through which to exercise mastery over the other" (([1981] 1996) 386). Thus Euripides, at the end of the play, returns to the stage dressed as a procuress and masterfully deploys sex, the feminine, and all the fine tricks that attend his subtle, sophistic style. Here and elsewhere Aristophanes' depictions of Euripides initiate a wryly turned set of literary critical conventions that offers up the body's metonymies and the places it belongs as indicators of styles that are themselves intricately bound up with literary critical modes. These thin, subtle, "bumsy" styles are those too refined for court and assembly; they belong with the philosophers, idling in the garden.

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FURTHER READING

The most influential studies of gender and mimesis in Aristophanes, Euripides, and drama more generally I highlighted at the outset of my discussion: Zeitlin (1981 and 1985). O’Sullivan’s (1992) monograph on Greek stylistic theory takes into account the Greek comic vocabulary that pegs style to the body; see also Davidson (1997), Biles (2002), Ruffell (2002), Wohl (2002), Worman (2008). On Euripides’ style in relation to dramatic and critical contexts, see Roselli (2005) and Wright (2010).

NOTES

1 By “sophists” I mean to designate those like Euripides whom comedy mockingly associates with sophistic activities and education, even though they are not *sophistai* in the narrow sense (i.e., teachers of rhetoric).

2 See, however, Bakola (2010), who argues that Cratinus’ mockery of poets (esp. Aeschylus) indicates a more innovative, varied, and richer literary range. My point here is only that Aristophanes concentrates his critical energies on “sophistic” strategies and particularly on Euripides more than other comic poets.

3 The penchant for quoting Euripides as the wise poet is especially evident in Plato, possibly Philodemus (though this is more difficult to determine from the fragments), and Plutarch. Plato quotes Euripides, or rather depicts Socrates quoting and referencing him more than Aeschylus and Sophocles. The references are not always flattering, especially the prominent one in the *Republic* that calls tragedy wise and Euripides particularly so, but then quotes him as claiming that those tyrants are wise who associate with wise men (*Rep*. 568a8–12; cf. *Thg*. 125b5–d4), which of course only reveals his demagoguery. For the judgment that Euripides is the wisest of the poets, see also Aristophanes *Clouds* 1377–78; *Lysistrata* 368; Aeschines *Against Timarchus* 151.

CHAPTER 34
Euripides in the Fourth Century BCE

Anne Duncan

Euripides died sometime in 406/405 BCE; we know this because of the famous anecdote about Sophocles and his actors appearing at the beginning of the annual dramatic festival called the Great Dionysia in the spring of 405 dressed in mourning to announce Euripides' death to the city of Athens (*Life of Euripides* 45–50). Also according to the anecdotal tradition, Euripides died in Macedon, at the court of king Archelaus, for whom he had composed a tragedy (the *Archelaus*, about Archelaus' eponymous ancestor) (*Life of Euripides* 20–25, 55–60, 120), and where he may have written the *Bacchae*, now considered to be his latecareer masterpiece. Thus Sophocles was announcing the news of the death abroad of a famous Athenian tragic poet to the international audience of the premier Athenian dramatic festival. And thus the end of Euripides' life story, at the end of the fifth century, suggests several important trends for his reputation and popularity in the next century: his international prominence, his interest in writing tragedies targeted at nonAthenian audiences, his late plays' popularity, and not least, his position of prominence in Athenian dramatic history.

1 Euripides' Supposed Unpopularity

These elements of Euripides' life story merit emphasis, because a conflicting strand of the ancient anecdotal, biographical, and literary critical tradition continues to exert a disproportionate influence on estimations of Euripides' significance in the fourth century BCE, and indeed, on his significance into the present day (see Scodel in this volume). This strand of the tradition focuses on Euripides' alleged lack of popularity with Athenian theater audiences during his own lifetime, noting that his plays took first place in the dramatic competitions only four times in his lifetime (plus one posthumous win in 405 for the trilogy that included the *Bacchae*), and they placed third frequently, and inferring that his possible move to Macedon at the end of his life was a sullen withdrawal from the Athenian populace whose favor he simply could not win over. This critical tradition then attributes the welldocumented and undeniable popularity of Euripides' plays in the fourth century to a decline both in the quality of fourth century tragedy and in the taste and critical discernment of fourthcentury audiences. The narrative of Euripides' lack of success during his lifetime, and his posthumous success with less sophisticated audiences, begins with various ancient sources that are hostile to tragedy (Plato), intent on ridiculing tragedy (Aristophanes' comedies, and the biographical traditions about Euripides based far too literally on them), or premised on applying a model of organic growth and decline to tragedy (Aristotle). This narrative was elaborated by eighteenth and nineteenthcentury critics, influenced by both neoClassicism and Romanticism, who were inclined to view Euripides' tragedies as inimical to the "true spirit" of tragedy, whatever that was supposed to be—and who were inclined to believe that the lack of surviving texts of

fourthcentury tragedies was a verdict by the ancients on their relative literary quality.

This strand of criticism has been vigorously contested in recent years by any number of scholars who are engaged with the plays of Euripides and with the history of fourth century tragedy and performance culture more broadly (Easterling (1993); Stevens (1956)). These scholars point out that there is good evidence of Euripides' popularity during his lifetime. For example, in the wake of the catastrophic Sicilian Expedition undertaken by the Athenian fleet during the Peloponnesian War, there is a story in Plutarch's biography of the Athenian commander Nicias (29.3) that Athenian prisoners of war who were captured and forced to work in the mines of Sicily were able to win their freedom from their Spartanallied captors by singing songs from Euripides' tragedies and reciting any other poetry they could remember from his plays. This story, if true, dates to 413, during the last decade of Euripides' life. It suggests that his tragedies had already achieved international recognition; as we will see, Sicily was a center of theatrical culture early on, and we find a great deal of evidence for Euripides' influence and popularity in the fourth century in Sicilian sources.

As for the evidence for Euripides' lack of success at the dramatic competitions, it needs to be put into a broader context. It is true that compared to Sophocles, whose tragedies won first place eighteen times in his lifetime, or to Aeschylus, whose tragedies won first place thirteen times in his lifetime, Euripides' tragedies won first place relatively infrequently. On the other hand, considering that only three tragic poets were "granted a Chorus" (i.e. allowed to compete) by Athenian officials each year, and that the winning poet was automatically entered into the next year's festival, the competition for the remaining two slots must have been fierce. Thus the number of times that Euripides was able to enter plays regularly into the dramatic competitions suggests he had an ongoing, high level of popularity with the Athenian public (Stevens (1956) 91–92). His reputation in antiquity for writing controversial plays, moreover —especially plays with controversial heroines—may have had something to do with his status as almost always being in the running for, but infrequently winning, first place. At the very least, the way Aristophanes' comedies portray Euripides suggests he was seen as something of a lightningrod for controversy.

2 Fourthcentury Performances of Euripides

What is not controversial is the popularity of Euripides' tragedies in the fourth century: of the fifthcentury tragedians, his plays were by far the most frequently performed. Rather than seeing this trend as in some way negative—whether as evidence of the lack of excellent fourthcentury tragic poets, or as evidence of fourthcentury audiences' taste for Euripidean "decadence" or "melodrama"—we should see this trend neutrally, as interesting in its own right for what it reveals about the change and development of tragedy after the fifth century, the period of its supposed "peak." Starting in 386 BCE, the victory records for the City Dionysia include two categories, rather than one, for tragedies: victorious "new tragedies," meaning tragedies by contemporary poets, and victorious "old tragedies," meaning tragedies by fifth century poets (Webster (1954) 294). The formation of a canon was already underway by the end of the fifth century, with the emergence of a circuit of smallerscale dramatic festivals in

deme theaters around Attica and the wider Greek world where famous plays by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides were staged alongside the works of upandcoming tragedians (Dearden (1999) 223–25), but the development of a separate award category for "old tragedies" at the Dionysia was surely indicative of the emergence of a "classic" repertoire of fifthcentury plays in the fourth century. Euripides' tragedies are represented more than those of any other fifthcentury tragedian in the inscriptional records of "old tragedies" performed at the Dionysia. For example, we know that one of Euripides' *Iphigenia* plays was performed there in 341, that his *Orestes* was performed there in 340, and a third tragedy by Euripides was performed there in 339 (the play's title is not preserved on the inscription) (*IG* 2318, 2320).

Aside from inscriptions, many other written sources testify to the impact and influence of Euripides' tragedies in the fourth century. Aristotle's *Poetics*, arguably the first work of literary criticism in the Western world, focuses mostly on tragedy and ranges over both fifth century tragedy (i.e. now part of the repertoire) and contemporary (i.e. fourthcentury) tragedy. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle calls Euripides "the most tragic of the poets" (1453a). He repeatedly refers to Euripides' *Iphigenia among the Taurians* as a model of the well constructed tragic plot and suggests that its thrilling combination of a reversal of fortune and a recognitionscene moments before imminent disaster should function as a model for contemporary tragedy (1454a, 1455a–b). Aristotle also criticizes Euripides in the *Poetics* for various faults in play composition. Some of Euripides' characters are implausible or inconsistent, he complains, such as Menelaus in the *Orestes* (unnecessarily wicked), Melanippe in *Melanippe the Wise* (too smart for a woman), or Iphigenia in *Iphigenia at Aulis* (beseeching in one speech, heroic in another) (1454a). Some of Euripides' recognitionscenes feel too contrived, he opines, such as the one in *Iphigenia among the Taurians* (1454b). Euripides does not follow Sophoclean practice in making the Chorus a character, which is what Aristotle argues is preferable in a tragedy, but rather resembles the late fifthcentury tragedian Agathon (and, it is clear, fourthcentury tragedians) in making his choral odes less integral to the plot and to interactions with other characters (1456a). All of Aristotle's discussion of specific plays by Euripides, regardless of whether individual plays meet with his approval, provides strong evidence that these plays were wellknown in Aristotle's lifetime. It is clear, moreover, that these plays were wellknown through performance, not only through reading, since Aristotle makes reference throughout the *Poetics* to the effects of costume (1450b), diction (1456a–59a), and other physical aspects of performance, as well referring to a tragic scene which did not work as well in performance as the playwright seems to have conceived it in his mind (1454a). This evidence for the performance of both "classic" and contemporary tragedies in the fourth century jibes with what we know of festival practice after 386, and it also helps to make sense of Aristotle's grousing about the role of the Chorus in tragedy these days, since revivals of "classic" tragedies by Sophocles or Euripides would necessarily feature fullblown choral odes (whether "properly" integrated into the action or not), providing a clear contrast to contemporary tragedies' increasingly vestigial Choruses. Thus Aristotle's *Poetics* provides abundant evidence of fourthcentury theater audiences' familiarity with the plays of Euripides in performance.

3 Evidence for Euripides' Influence on Fourthcentury Tragedy

Fourthcentury Tragic Plots

Fourthcentury tragedy survives only in fragments and titles, but even these scraps of evidence reveal the weight of Euripides' influence. The plot of Carcinus' *Medea*, as summarized in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (1400b), seems to have presented itself as a direct challenge and contrast to Euripides' *Medea*: in Carcinus' fourthcentury tragedy, Medea does not kill her children, but hides them away from others who might wish to do them harm. As Euripides seems to have been the first tragedian to depict Medea deliberately killing her children, Carcinus' version comes across as a pointed contrast—and allusion—to Euripides' famous fifthcentury play (XanthakisKaramanos (1980) 29; Webster (1954) 301). There is tenuous evidence for two other possible fourthcentury tragedies about Medea, from a fragment of a preserved tragic text and from a vasepainting, and these tragedies seem to have been distinct from each other and directly dependent on knowledge of Euripides' *Medea* as well (Webster (1954) 301). Carcinus also seems to have softened the most shocking elements in another adaptation of a Euripidean tragedy, the *Alope*, by having Alope's father Cercyon kill himself in his shame at her rape by Poseidon (Aristotle, *Nichmachean Ethics* 1150b), rather than killing her, as Cercyon seems to have done in Euripides' *Alope* (Hyginus, *Fabulae* 187, 238). Aristotle praises Astydamas' *Alcmaeon* in the *Poetics* for its "secondbest" kind of plot construction, in which one family member (Alcmaeon) murders another (his mother) in ignorance of her identity and recognizes the truth only afterwards (1453b). There were a number of fifth century (and other fourthcentury) tragedies about Alcmaeon, none of which has survived, but none of which seems to have depicted Alcmaeon committing his crime in ignorance; we know from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* that Euripides' two *Alcmaeon*tragedies (*Alcmaeon in Psophis* and *Alcmaeon in Corinth*) depicted Alcmaeon murdering his mother while fully aware of her identity (1110a, 1136a). This may be another example of a fourthcentury tragedian deliberately softening the most controversial aspect of a wellknown Euripidean tragedy, but with so many other fifthcentury treatments of the story (by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Agathon), it is impossible to say with certainty (XanthakisKaramanos (1979) 100–01). What is possible to say with certainty is that many fourthcentury tragedies' plots were directly influenced by Euripides' tragic plots, even when they pointedly avoided the most controversial actions, like deliberate murder of kin, in Euripides' most famous (or infamous) plays.

The Anecdotal Tradition

Biographical and other historiographical sources also provide evidence about the ongoing popularity of Euripides' tragedies in the fourth century, although some of these sources, like the ancient *Lives* of the poets, are less than fully reliable and thus tricky to interpret (Lefkowitz (1981)). We have already discussed two anecdotes from the *Life of Euripides*: the story about Sophocles appearing in mourning to announce Euripides' death, and the story about his time at

the court of Archelaus at the end of his life. Most scholars are willing to accept the broad outlines of these stories as true, if not all the details, such as the story that Euripides died in Macedon after being dismembered by a pack of hunting dogs; this sounds too much like the death of Pentheus in the *Bacchae*, which Euripides supposedly wrote in Macedon, to be believed.

Despite the dangers in taking the details of theatrical anecdotes at face value, the anecdotes can provide valuable information about ancient performance culture. For example, there are many anecdotes about the fourthcentury tyrant of Syracuse, Dionysius I, who wrote tragedies and admired the works of the "classic" fifthcentury tragedians. In one famous anecdote that exists in multiple versions, Dionysius paid a great deal of money (a talent) to acquire either Aeschylus' writingtablets or Euripides' writingtablets and stylus, then dedicated them in a temple of the Muses (*Life of Euripides* 5). In another anecdote, Dionysius was trying to compel a guest to choose one of three courtesans with which to spend the night, and the guest attempted to choose all three of them, justifying his extravagant request by quoting a line from Euripides' *Bacchae* (Athenaeus 12.544e). These anecdotes are often humorous—Dionysius' own poetry was reputed to be terrible—and so there is a sense in them that Dionysius' admiration for Euripides winds up making him look foolish, whether because he seems to be trying to buy Euripides' literary inspiration, or because his guests know how to take advantage of him by simply quoting Euripides. Furthermore, these anecdotes are preserved in much later sources, which adds an extra layer of uncertainty to the factual accuracy of the stories. On the one hand, it seems telling that there are different versions of the anecdote about Dionysius buying a famous tragic poet's writingtablets; this is probably not very strong evidence about the popularity of Euripides compared to Aeschylus, since they are interchangeable in the anecdote, but it does suggest that they were both plausible as objects of admiration and even reverence. On the other hand, the point of the second anecdote—the "punchline"—is that the guest tries to choose all three courtesans; the use of the quotation from the *Bacchae* seems incidental to the point of the story. Thus it may be that, as Dearden has argued ((1990) 232–33), this second anecdote provides more reliable information that the audience for this story—and the internal audience of Dionysius and his court, in the fourth century—would be expected to recognize and appreciate a quotation from the *Bacchae*. Another anecdotal tradition suggests the plays of Euripides were popular with another fourthcentury tyrant, Alexander of Pherai, who was supposedly so moved upon seeing a play of Euripides—different versions of the anecdote suggest the *Trojan Women*, *Hecuba*, or *Cresphontes* as the play in question—that he leapt up from his seat and left the theater, saying that it would be bad for his subjects to see him weeping at the travails of a fictional heroine when he had caused so much real suffering (Aelian, *Miscellany* 14.40; cf. Plutarch, *Moralia* 334a). Obviously, this anecdotal tradition is not helpful in determining the relative popularity of Euripides' various tragedies, since the sources do not agree on which tragedy was performed, but it does provide some evidence that Euripides' tragedies in the fourth century were popular, were performed around the Greek world, and possibly, that they were thought of as having pathetic heroines.

Middle Comedy

References to Euripides' plays are not confined to anecdotes in ancient biographies and histories; they occur quite frequently in fourthcentury comedy, another valuable source of evidence for Euripides' ongoing popularity and influence in the fourth century. At the beginning of the fourth century, Greek comedy began to move away from the political and social satire of Aristophanes and his contemporaries, known as Old Comedy, and towards more universally appealing, less quickly dated and locally relevant forms of humor, such as mythological parody and the comedy of broadly defined character types. This development is known as Middle Comedy, and its timing is no coincidence: it emerged as both tragedy and comedy became panHellenic, and indeed, international art forms; as dramatic festivals emerged outside of Athens and its geographic region, Attica; as actors began to travel to these festivals and, possibly, to organize into early unions; as a repertory theater of "classic" fifthcentury tragedies emerged. The international market for drama demanded comedies that would play equally well in South Italy or Sicily as they would in Athens, which explains the popularity of mythological parody in Middle Comedy; mythology was a universal cultural currency in the Greek world, spread, in no small part, by performances of tragedy. Thus it should be no surprise that there seem to have been entire comedies written parodying Euripides' tragedies, such as the comedies called *Medea* by Antiphanes, Eubulus, and Strattis; the comedies parodying Euripides' *Meleager* by Alexis, Antiphanes, Philetairus, Philyllius, and Strattis; Antiphanes' *Alcestis* and the comedies called *Admetus* (parodying Euripides' *Alcestis*) by Aristomenes and Theopompus; the comedies parodying Euripides' *Oenomaus* by Antiphanes, Eubulus, and Nicochares; the comedies called *Helen* by Alexis and Anaxandrides; Anaxandrides' *Heracles* and Eubulus' *Auge* (possibly parodying Euripides' *Heracles*); Antiphanes' *Aeolus*; Antiphanes' *Bacchae*; Alexis' *Orestes*; Anaxandrides' *Erechtheus*; Eubulus' *Antiope*; and Eubulus' *Bellerophon* (parodying Euripides' *Stheneboea*). Fragments of fourthcentury comedy also parody lines from Euripides' tragedies, such as Eubulus' *Dionysius*, which ridicules lines from Euripides' *Andromeda* and *Medea*. All of these references, both playlength, sustained parodies and shorter references or quotations, testify to fourthcentury theater audiences' familiarity with the plays of Euripides in performance, and suggest his tragedies' ongoing popularity. This is further strengthened by the way that characters in fourthcentury comedies refer to Euripides, as in a fragment of Philemon where a character says that he would hang himself in order to meet Euripides in the afterlife, if only he could be certain of the existence of an afterlife (*Unattributed fragment* 130 Kock). We even know of a comedy called *The EuripidesLover* (*Phileuripides*), by the midfourthcentury comic playwright Axionicus (XanthakisKaramanos (1980) 32–33; Webster (1954) 296–97).

Vase Paintings

This brings us to another category of evidence for the popularity of Euripides' tragedies that is more complicated to interpret, but also more suggestive of the broad geographical range of performance culture in the fourth century: vase painting. There are several kinds of vase paintings that bear examination in the context of theater history. Many vases that have been excavated in the GrecoRoman world and are datable to the fourth century BCE depict people, objects, or structures that are explicitly theatrical, such as actors holding masks, actors

in full costume and mask (that they are actors in costume is usually made clear in some way: the vasepainter will show them costumed as mythological creatures, like satyrs, or with the jawline of the mask painted a different color than the actor's neck), masks hanging on an interior building wall (often meant to suggest a votive offering in a temple after a successful performance), or a low wooden stage with stairs and doors (Taplin (2007) 10–13, 27–28). Sometimes the figures are even labeled with the names of the characters they are playing. In general, the vase paintings that are most explicit in their depiction of theatrical props and stages tend to be those relating to comedy, not tragedy (Green (1991)). Other vase paintings are not so explicit in showing the trappings of the stage, but they are suggestive nonetheless: there may be a scene with characters familiar from mythology, but some of the characters are wearing tragic actors' boots, or there may be a scene with mythological characters from a particular tragic treatment of that mythology, or a scene with Dionysus, the god of theater, and some figures that may or may not suggest a theatrical context. One important caveat is that we almost never see vase paintings that are simply and clearly "illustrations" of a particular, known scene from a particular, known tragedy or comedy; even when the vase painting is clearly related to a particular play, it may show elements from different parts of the play's plot combined into one visual tableau, or it may depict elements from the play's plot that are not staged (violent actions reported in tragic messenger speeches, for example), or it may include figures who do not correspond to any known characters from that play (Taplin (2007) 28–43).

Given this caveat about not treating vase paintings as straightforward (and ancillary) "illustrations" of Greek tragedy, and given the difficulty of connecting some vase paintings that have dramatic elements to particular plays, it is still possible to draw some important conclusions from fourthcentury vase paintings about the influence and popularity of Euripides in the Greek world. To begin with, most of the vase paintings that can plausibly be connected to Euripidean tragedy have been excavated, not in Attica, but in Sicily and South Italy—*Megale Hellas*, as the Greeks called it, or *Magna Graecia*, as the Romans called it: "Great Greece." Most of the bestpreserved vases come from undisturbed tombs of wealthy individuals in South Italy, and virtually all of them were produced and painted locally. The vases are large and are lavishly decorated; they were for show, not for daily use. Most current scholarship does not attempt to argue for thematic connections between the particular plays referenced on the vases and funereal, Underworld, or afterlife themes; it seems more plausible to posit that the deceased was a fan of tragedy in general, probably Euripides in particular, and perhaps of the specific play in question (Taplin (2007) 43–46). This information alone is quite valuable in establishing that by the early fourth century, there was a market in the larger Greekspeaking world for pottery with images of the Greek theater, undoubtedly stimulated by the spread of Greek theatrical performance across the Mediterranean world. (We have already seen evidence of the popularity of Greek tragedy in Sicily, if we recall the anecdotes about the Sicilian tyrant Dionysius I and his reverence for "classic," possibly Euripidean, tragedy.)

We can draw more detailed conclusions from the vase paintings, however. Of the extant vases that seem to refer to tragedy (estimated to be approximately 400 vases; Taplin (2007) 15), Euripides is far better represented than his "classic" contemporaries Aeschylus and Sophocles: approximately half of Euripides' surviving tragedies can be associated with at

least one vase painting, and another ten or fifteen vase paintings seem to correspond to tragedies by Euripides that we know of but that have not survived (Taplin (2007) 109; XanthakisKaramanos (1980) 33–34). By comparison, Aeschylus' *Oresteia* is the single set of tragedies most often associated with extant vase paintings, but very few of Aeschylus' other plays, surviving or lost, can be connected with any surviving vase painting (Taplin (2007) 48–49).

As for particular tragedies referred to by vase paintings, discussion of a few examples will have to suffice. The Euripidean tragedies most frequently evoked in fourthcentury South Italian vase paintings are *Medea*, *Hippolytus*, and *Iphigenia among the Taurians* (Taplin (2007) 109). (This, of course, may be a misleading index of popularity, given that we possess neither all of the tragedies that Euripides wrote nor all of the vase paintings that may relate to tragedy.) As with all of the vase paintings relating to tragedy, the correspondences between the paintings and the extant play texts can be quite strong, but never exact. For example, of the *Medea*vases, one vase depicts a princess falling while clutching at her headdress (Taplin (2007) 115–16), which is the scene that the messengerspeech in Euripides' *Medea* evokes in the audience's mind (but which is not depicted onstage); two different vases depict Medea flying in a chariot drawn by dragons or snakes (in one vase painting she is even labeled "Medea"), which corresponds well, although not exactly, with the end of Euripides' tragedy, where Medea escapes in a flying chariot given to her by the Sun, her grandfather—but the text never specifies that the chariot is drawn by dragons or snakes (Taplin (2007) 117–23). Thus the visual evidence strongly supports a tradition of theatrical performance of Euripides' *Medea*, and suggests, moreover, that viewers of these vases would have been able to recognize "offstage" scenes (such as messengerspeeches) and that later performance traditions incorporated elements that might not be given in the text, but became standard in repertory production (all of the fourthcentury and later vase paintings relating to Medea show her chariot being drawn by dragons or snakes). Similarly, there are a number of fourthcentury South Italian vases depicting the death of Hippolytus in a chariot wreck, often overseen by Aphrodite (Taplin (2007) 135–38); this is another "offstage" scene reported in a messenger speech that must have become quite famous. As for *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, it is one of the most commonly referenced Euripidean tragedies in fourthcentury vase painting. The vase paintings, which span most of the fourth century and come from all over the Greek world, depict two scenes over and over again: Iphigenia handing the letter to Orestes which will reveal the siblings' identities to each other, and Orestes, Pylades, and Iphigenia fleeing the temple of Artemis with her cult statue. As Taplin ((2007) 149–56) notes, these two objects, the letter and the cult statue on which the vase paintings focus, were undoubtedly significant stage properties as well. If we combine the evidence of vase painting with Aristotle's praise of *Iphigenia among the Taurians* in the *Poetics*, the conclusion must be that this was an extremely popular play in performance throughout the Greek world, throughout the fourth century.

Many other Euripidean tragedies seem to have related vase paintings from South Italy. There are several vase paintings that may relate to Euripides' *Children of Heracles*, most of them depicting someone taking refuge at an altar with multiple children, often with either Heracles

or an image of Heracles present. Many of these vases were excavated near Heraclea, a town founded by Dorian colonists and named for Heracles in South Italy. If the paintings do relate to that play, then it is interesting evidence both for Euripides' panHellenic appeal (*Children of Heracles* was composed and performed for the first time around the beginning of the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta, a Doric city, and the play includes many anti Spartan lines) and for changes in audience taste between the ancient and modern worlds (*Children of Heracles* is generally one of Euripides' leastadmired tragedies these days, and many might not have predicted that it would have become part of the fourthcentury repertory theater) (Taplin (2007) 126–30; Allan (2001); Dearden (1999) 237).

Most tantalizingly, there are vase paintings that seem to correspond to what we know of now lost Euripidean tragedies. While we cannot use the vase paintings to "fill in" the plot of the lost plays, because of the difficulties in interpretation outlined above, we can use them as evidence of the popularity of a much larger selection of Euripides' plays in the fourth century than have survived to the present day. One good example is Euripides' *Stheneboea* (which, as we recall, seems to have been parodied by Eubulus' *Bellerophon*). There are approximately twenty South Italian vase paintings from the fourth century which depict aspects of the story of Stheneboea's quasiincestuous love for her stepson Bellerophon, often focusing on the moment when Bellerophon accepts a letter from his father to take to his grandfather, not knowing it contains a false accusation of rape and a request that the grandfather have Bellerophon killed (Taplin (2007) 201–04; Dearden (1999) 236); we might compare the very popular scene on vases connected to the *Iphigenia among the Taurians* which similarly depicts the moment of a highlycharged letter changing hands. While it is not definite that any of these vases relates specifically to Euripides' *Stheneboea*, we know of no other fifth century tragedies on this story, and we know that Euripides' *Stheneboea*, like his *Hippolytus*, was notorious (and popular) for its depiction of illicit passion. Another example of vase paintings suggesting the popularity of a nowlost play is Euripides' *Andromeda*. Perhaps two dozen surviving fourthcentury South Italian vase paintings depict a richlydressed girl whose wrists are tied to something immobile, most often a rocky archway (which, due to its semimanmade quality, is often considered to reflect a contemporary stage property), sometimes a pair of trees or columns. Perseus is often depicted in his winged sandals (or sometimes, winged tragic boots) and his sickleshaped knife, with which he has decapitated Medusa; one or both of Andromeda's parents are often depicted as well (Taplin (2007) 174–85). These images strongly recall Euripides' *Andromeda*, which, while lost to us today, was extensively quoted and even parodied throughout the fourth century, testifying to its ongoing popularity.

This brings us to an unusually close connection between a vase painting and Euripidean tragedy, although the reference to tragedy is mediated through a reference to an Old Comedy of Aristophanes. The "Wurzburg Telephus" vase was found in South Italy and is dated to approximately the 370s BCE. The vase depicts a particular scene from Aristophanes' *Women at the Thesmophoria* (*Thesmophoriazusae*), a late fifthcentury comedy that extensively parodies various tragedies of Euripides, including the *Andromeda*, the *Helen*, and the *Telephus*. The overall plot of the play is a burlesque of Euripides' *Telephus*, which concerned

the travails of Telephus, a king in Asia Minor wounded by Achilles before the start of the Trojan War, who was told by an oracle that he could only be healed by the one who had wounded him. In order to gain access to the Greek camp, Telephus disguised himself as a beggar; in order to force Achilles to meet his demands to be healed, he seized the infant Orestes and held him over an altar, threatening to kill him. The plot of *Women at the Thesmophoria* has a relative of Euripides disguise himself as a woman in order to infiltrate a meeting of women who are hostile to Euripides; once his disguise is penetrated, he seizes what he believes to be a baby from one of the women and holds it over an altar, threatening to kill it —only to discover that the "baby" is a wineskin the woman has been "nursing." This is the scene depicted on the South Italian vase painting. For this vase painting to be meaningful to a viewer, the viewer must have been familiar both with the *Women at the Thesmophoria* and with the Euripidean tragedies it parodies. This vase is therefore of great interest, since it suggests not only an ongoing fourthcentury performance tradition of Euripidean tragedy, but very possibly of Old Comedy as well (Taplin (2007) 14; Dearden (1999) 241–42).

New Comedy

We have discussed parodies of Euripides in Old and Middle Comedy; it remains to discuss Euripides' relationship with New Comedy. One of the most enduring aspects of Euripides' literary and theatrical influence is on the development of comedy in the fourth century, specifically on the development of Greek New Comedy. Our only surviving example of New Comedy is the work of Menander, which betrays a strong Euripidean influence. The influence, however, is not revealed through parody or direct reference at all; New Comedy seems to have moved away from Middle Comedy's plots of mythological burlesque and the satire of poets, philosophers, politicians, and other prominent historical individuals. (None of the titles of Menander's comedies that have come down to us suggests mythological parody, for example.) Instead, New Comedy borrows and adapts the plots of certain sorts of Euripidean tragedy, specifically those tragedies sometimes labeled "melodrama" or "romance"; these are plays like the *Ion*, *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, *Andromeda*, and *Helen*, most of them written towards the end of Euripides' career, which focus on the reunion of separated lovers or relatives, usually after overcoming dangerous obstacles, often in exotic lands. These tragedies often have plots that revolve around questions of mistaken identity (rather than, say, questions of conflicting duty), and thus there is usually some sort of recognitionscene, with the recognition of the lost loved one's identity sometimes revealed by a "token" (as Aristotle notes disapprovingly in *Poetics* 1454b), such as a ring, a baby blanket, or a letter. Sometimes the recognitionscene is aided by amazing coincidences of timing and/or divine intervention. There are often blocking figures standing in the way of the reunion, and some of these blocking figures, such as the wicked foreign king, become almost stock characters, anticipating New Comedy's reliance on stock characters, such as the boastful soldier (XanthakisKaramanos (1980)). Many of these Euripidean tragedies have happy endings (that is, no sympathetic characters die), and this detail may make it less surprising that a tragedian's greatest influence, arguably, was on the development of comedy. To sum up, we might say that these late Euripidean tragedies develop the plot of the "family romance" or the domestic drama, in which

the tension centers on the reintegration of a family, rather than the integration of an individual with a state or larger, nonfamily group. The domestic drama becomes the heart of the New Comedy plot, which in turn influences Roman Comedy, which in turn influences Western comedy right up to the present day sitcom.

To give a few specific examples, Menander's *The Arbitration* (*Epitrepontes*) borrows heavily from Euripides' *Ion* in its overall plot of a foundling reunited with his/her family, and from Euripides' *Alope* in its recognitionscene. Menander's fragmentary *Sicyonians* (*Sicyonioi*) quotes the messengerspeech of Euripides' *Orestes*. Menander's fragmentary *The Girl with Cropped Hair* (*Perikeiromene*) has a plot in which a longlost brother and sister are reunited that is strongly reminiscent of the reunion of Orestes and Iphigenia in Euripides' *Iphigenia among the Taurians* (Green (1994) 51; XanthakisKaramanos (1980) 33). A set of wall paintings from the late second century CE from Ephesus pairs scenes from Menander's comedies with "corresponding" scenes from Euripides' tragedies, which at the very least is evidence that later audiences saw Euripides as an important influence on or source for Menander; if Green ((1994) 51) is right that these paintings can be traced to early Hellenistic sources, then we can argue that the popular association between the two playwrights (or genres) was possibly already present in the fourth century BCE.

4 Conclusions

Based on both textual and artistic evidence, Euripides' tragedies enjoyed tremendous popularity in the fourth century. They were performed often, both at the Athenian dramatic festivals and in the larger Greekspeaking world; they seem to have had a particular following in Southern Italy. They influenced the development of both fourthcentury tragedy and fourthcentury comedy. If we look at the evidence for which of Euripides' tragedies were most popular in the fourth century, we can draw some tentative conclusions about the reasons for Euripides' farreaching influence. Textual sources suggest that some of Euripides' most popular tragedies in the fourth century were *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, *Medea*, *Stheneboea*, *Andromeda*, *Meleager*, *Oenomaus*, and *Orestes*. Artistic evidence provides a slightly different list: *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, *Medea*, *Stheneboea*, *Andromeda*, *Hippolytus*, and perhaps *Children of Heracles*. Several themes emerge from these lists: exotic settings (*Iphigenia among the Taurians*, *Andromeda*); illicit passion (*Stheneboea*, *Hippolytus*); mad scenes (*Orestes*, *Children of Heracles*); controversial heroines (*Medea*, *Stheneboea*, *Hippolytus*); happy endings (*Iphigenia among the Taurians*, *Andromeda*). These plot elements can be connected to various larger trends in Greek dramatic history. The growing internationalism of drama might have made nonGreek settings more appealing; it also might have created a preference among audiences in the wider Greek world for more universally appealing plots involving the "family romance" rather than those involving the individual in conflict with a particular Greek citystate, as some scholars have speculated (Xanthakis Karamanos (1980), (1979)), although as other scholars have pointed out (Allan (2001)), some of Euripides' most Athenocentric plays, such as *Children of Heracles*, seem to have been performed and appreciated all over the Greek world in the fourth century, including in Doric

colonies. Without question, the professionalization of actors, some of whom became superstars in the fourth century, created a demand for scenerychewing speeches (for example, involving illicit passion, the desire for revenge, or the depiction of madness). The professionalization of the musicians involved in Greek dramatic performance may also have contributed to the ongoing popularity of Euripides' later plays, many of which show signs of the technically sophisticated "New Music" of the late fifth century (Csapo (1999–2000)). But the popularity of these plot elements can also be connected to qualities specific to Euripides: his fascination with extreme mental states, his interest in dramatizing the most morally controversial versions of wellknown myths, his playful revisionism of the tragic canon. All of these qualities dovetailed with the tastes and interests of fourthcentury theater audiences. We might also add Euripides' accessible language, his use of nonelite characters, and his flair for spectacular staging to the list of reasons why his tragedies continued to find engaged audiences in the century after his death, and well beyond.

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FURTHER READING

On Euripides' influence on fourthcentury tragedy, see Allan (2001), Csapo (1999–2000), Dearden (1990) and (1999), Easterling (1993), Green (1994), and XanthakisKaramanos (1979). XanthakisKaramanos (1980) remains the most comprehensive treatment of fourth century tragedy, although some of her more general conclusions have been contested recently. On the critical debate over Euripides' biography and influence, see Lefkowitz (1981), Stevens (1956), Webster (1954) and Scodel in this volume. On the connections between vase painting and dramatic performance, see especially Taplin (2007), who provides the most up to date treatment in English of the range of vase paintings and steers a middle road through the critical debates surrounding their connection to drama; see also Allan (2001), Dearden (1990), and Green (1991).

CHAPTER 35
Euripides and Senecan Drama

Christopher Star

Poet, philosopher, politician, Lucius Annaeus Seneca (circa 4 BCE–65 CE) is a study in contradictions. He was exiled to Corsica by Claudius and later returned to the center of imperial power to become Nero's tutor, advisor, speechwriter, and consul. Eventually, Nero would prove much crueler than Claudius. He sentenced his former teacher to death based on hearsay that Seneca was involved in the failed Pisonian conspiracy against the emperor (Tacitus *Annals* 15.60–3; Cassius Dio 62.25). Seneca's position under Nero allowed him to become extravagantly wealthy. Yet his works recommend Stoic indifference to external goods, praise traditional Roman frugality, and encourage days of selfenforced poverty. He dedicated a treatise to Nero entitled *On Mercy*, yet he also helped the emperor cover up the murder of his mother, Agrippina. Instead of producing a philosopherking, Seneca is remembered as a teacher of a tyrant (Cassius Dio 61.10.2). Even Seneca's two main bodies of work, philosophy and tragedy, exist in an uneasy tension with each other. As a Stoic, Seneca argues that the passions should be eradicated from the human soul and that the world is guided by benevolent divine providence. As a dramatist, however, Seneca engages with the literary genre most associated with the arousal of emotions. And indeed, his plays portray a world dominated by fury and madness.

Given the amount we know about Seneca's life, and the amount of his work that has survived, interpretations of Senecan tragedy frequently take a comparative approach. How does it comment on Seneca's political life? How does Senecan drama relate to his philosophy? Because Seneca's dramas, in addition to two ascribed to him (*Hercules on Mt. Oeta* and *Octavia*), are the only complete tragedies to survive in Latin from antiquity, his works have been set alongside classical Athenian drama. Indeed, the titles that have been traditionally assigned to Seneca's plays suggest a close connection with those of the three great Athenian dramatists: *Agamemnon* (Aeschylus), *Oedipus* (Sophocles), *Hercules, Trojan Women, Phoenician Women, Medea*, and *Phaedra* (Euripides). Only Seneca's *Thyestes* lacks an extant precedent with which to compare it, although it was a favorite subject of Greek and Roman drama. The history of the comparison between Senecan tragedy and Greek tragedy is also a study in contrasts. In his *Discorsi* of 1543 Giraldi Cintio wrote that in prudence, gravity, decorum, majesty, and epigrams, Seneca surpassed all the Greeks who had ever written. In his *Poetics* of 1561 Julius Caesar Scaliger wrote that with his elegance and splendor Seneca was even greater than Euripides. By the nineteenth century, however, the critical assessment of Senecan drama had reversed itself. To take but one example, Friedrich Leo, who edited the tragedies (1878–9), claimed that they were not really dramas, but rather declamations divided into acts (Boyle (1983) 1–3). Even when not explicitly judging Seneca in comparison with the Greeks, it has often been assumed that the two are to be read side by side. For example, the first edition of the Loeb translations of Seneca's tragedies, published in 1917, contains an

appendix with comparisons of Seneca's plays with the Greek versions.

The view of the Greeks as Seneca's "primary" source of influence has been successfully challenged by Richard Tarrant. For example, in his edition of Seneca's *Agamemnon*, he demonstrates that Seneca's play shows virtually no traces of Aeschylus (Tarrant (1976) 10). As Tarrant himself admits, the fact that Seneca's *Agamemnon* cannot be linked with Aeschylus' play is "an extreme case" (Tarrant (1978) 215–17). Nevertheless, it does provide an important caveat for reading Seneca in tandem with his Greek predecessors. In his study of Senecan dramatic technique, Tarrant clearly demonstrates that several elements, such as fiveact structure, limited role of the Chorus, asides, entrance and exit monologues, have more in common with Hellenistic and Roman drama than with fifthcentury Athenian tragedy (Tarrant (1978) 218–57). There is no reason to doubt that Seneca had read Euripides' *Heracles*, *Trojan Women*, *Phoenician Women*, *Hippolytus* (most likely versions one and two), and *Medea*. At the same time, it must be noted that Seneca had access to nearly five hundred years of literary tradition, much of which, particularly Hellenistic and Republican drama, has been largely lost. For example, because Ovid's Medea as portrayed in the *Metamorphoses* and the *Heroines* provides important intertexts for Seneca's play, Ovid's tragedy *Medea* must have also influenced Seneca's play. Unfortunately only two lines of this work have survived. Similarly, Varius' lost *Thyestes*, performed in celebration of Augustus in 29 BCE, must have influenced Seneca as well.

Although Seneca does not discuss his tragedies in his prose works, he does outline his method of composition. In the *Moral Epistles*, Seneca likens the process of writing to that of bees gathering nectar from various flowers, then storing it and combining it to produce a mixture that both reveals its various origins and is entirely new (*Moral Epistles* 84). While it is difficult to find "pure" Euripidean material in Senecan drama, there are a few direct citations of Euripides in Seneca's philosophy. This chapter first discusses Seneca's reception of Euripides in his prose works. Seneca's lengthiest discussion of Euripides comes in *Epistle* 115, where Seneca recounts a (likely apocryphal) story about the performance of one of his dramas in Athens. This vignette provides us with a means for assessing the problems of looking to Senecan philosophy as the key for his dramas. More specifically, this story highlights the gulf between his own works and Seneca's image of Euripidean drama. The chapter then analyzes Seneca's five "Euripidean" plays, *Madness of Hercules*, *Trojan Women*, *Phoenician Women*, *Medea*, and *Phaedra*. This focus does not mean that Seneca does not incorporate Euripidean material into his three other plays, *Oedipus*, *Agamemnon* and *Thyestes*. He does. For example, the Fury that opens Thyestes has been connected with the appearance of Lyssa in Euripides' *Madness of Heracles* (Schiesaro (2003) 84). By looking at these five plays, we can trace Seneca's engagement with Euripides where it may have been at its most direct and also demonstrate how Seneca Romanizes Euripides by combining his material with other, mostly nondramatic, Latin poets.

1 Seneca on Euripides

Seneca mentions the "big three" Athenian tragedians only once in his extant corpus. He does

not declare them to be the sources of his tragedies, nor does he praise their dramatic abilities. Rather, the three appear in Seneca's work of natural philosophy, the *Natural Questions*, and are set up as straw men against whom Seneca presents his own theories for the seasonal rising of the Nile. He cites the tragedians, along with the preSocratic philosopher Anaxagoras, as examples of the mistaken opinions of the ancients (*Natural Questions* 4a.2.17). It is unlikely that Seneca discovered these opinions from his own reading of the Greek tragedians. It is more probable that they were already cited as authorities in one of Seneca's philosophic sources (Mazzoli (1970) 174).

A more damning condemnation of the Greek tragedians comes in *Epistle* 115. In order to demonstrate how poets praise the pursuit of wealth, Seneca offers examples from both Latin and Greek literature. First he condemns Ovid's description of the palace and chariot of the Sun from the *Metamorphoses* (*Moral Epistles* 115.13 = *Metamorphoses* 2.1–2; 107–8). Then he reels off a series of verses, culled from Greek tragedy. Seneca writes:

Nor among the Greek tragedians are there lacking those who barter blamelessness, health and good reputation for monetary gain.

Allow me to be called the basest, as long as I am called rich.

We all ask whether one is rich, not good.

People only ask how much you have, not how or from where.

Everywhere each person is worth as much as he has.

You ask what it is shameful for us to possess? Nothing.

I choose to live as a rich man, or die as a poor one.

He dies well who dies while making money.

Money, the human race's great good,

Which neither delight in one's mother nor the sweet words

Of children nor a parent sacred in kindnesses can equal;

If anything so sweet shines in the face of Venus,

Deservedly she moves the loves of gods and men.

> When these final verses were spoken in Euripides' tragedy, everybody rose up together to throw out both the actor and the play, until Euripides himself jumped into the middle asking that they wait and see what end that lover of gold made. In that story Bellerophon paid the penalty, just as each person does in one's own. There is no form of avarice without penalty, although avarice itself is enough of a penalty.
>
> (*Moral Epistles* 115.14–15)

Seneca is likely mistaken about the play from which these lines were taken, however. Scholars assign them to Euripides' *Danae*, rather than the *Bellerophon*. In fact, his lengthy discussion of

Greek tragedy in *Epistle* 115 suggests that, rather than quoting directly from the Greek plays, Seneca is using an anthology of quotes and working within the apocryphal tradition of the life of Euripides (Lefkowitz (1981); Kovacs (1994)). It may be tempting to apply Seneca's vignette of the performance of Euripidean drama to his own tragedies. Yet the vision of Greek tragedy presented in *Epistle* 115 appears to be the inverse of Seneca's tragedies, particularly in terms of performance and content.

We do not know whether Seneca's plays were performed during his lifetime. Furthermore, we do not even know whether Seneca wrote with fullscale performance in mind, or if his plays were intended to be "recitation dramas." Traditionally, scholars have favored the latter, believing that if Seneca's plays were performed they were given as dramatic readings in a small, private setting (e.g. Zwierlein (1966); Tarrant (1976) 7). This theory has been critiqued recently, and convincing arguments have been presented that Seneca intended his plays to be staged (Boyle (1997) 11; Harrison (2000)). For example, P.J. Davis claims that the recent successful performances of Seneca's plays suggest that Seneca wrote for dramatic staging (Davis (2003) 19–36). There is also a third way of considering the problem. Seneca could have written his tragedies with only certain scenes intended for the stage, while others were intended for recitation (Fitch (2000) 9–11). Nevertheless, we cannot securely ascribe Seneca's vision of the performance context of Euripidean drama to his own.

In further contrast to *Epistle* 115, Seneca's plays lack moral endings in which vice is punished or a satisfactory reconciliation between protagonists is achieved. For example, the celebration of friendship and the portrayal of Athens as a refuge for the afflicted that ends Euripides' *Heracles* is virtually absent from Seneca's play. The majority of the final act consists of Hercules and Amphitryon's dueling threats of suicide (1218; 1240–5; 1302–13). Seneca's plays typically conclude with powerful expressions of despair (e.g. *Trojan Women*, *Phaedra*, *Medea*) or the triumph of revenge (*Medea*, *Thyestes*). At the risk of giving away the endings, let me simply note that T.S. Eliot writes about the conclusion of *Medea*, "I can think of no other play which reserves such a shock for the last word" (Eliot (1932) 59). Euripides' admonition to withhold judgment until the end of the play may offer a model for the Stoic interpretation of Seneca's tragedies, but such a view is problematic as well.

How did Seneca hope his audience would react to his plays? With sympathetic emotional identification? Or with Stoic detachment? Drawing parallels to the concepts "epic theater" and "alienation effect" of Bertolt Brecht, Martha Nussbaum argues:

> [T]he dramatic structure of Senecan drama actively impedes sympathetic identification, promoting critical spectatorship and critical reflection about the passions. For the central characters repel the spectator, making it difficult to be "infected" by their passions, difficult to view them as anything but diseased.
>
> (Nussbaum (1993) 148)

As other scholars have pointed out, however, the audience must come to Seneca's plays already holding Stoic convictions if the idea of "critical spectatorship" is to work (Schiesaro (1997) 111; Bartsch (2007) 95). In fact, Seneca's plays engage with the problem of the

emotions and tragic spectatorship and recognition. At the end of her play, Medea calls on Jason, whom she refers to as "that spectator" (993), to lift his tearful eyes and recognize his wife (1020–1). In the *Trojan Women*, the executions of Astyanax and Polyxena are described as theatrical events. In order to get a better view of Astyanax as he is thrown from the last standing tower of Troy, the Greeks climb trees, hills, cliffs, and the burntout remains of the city. One "savage spectator" even sits atop Hector's tomb (1075–87). The sacrifice of Polyxena on Achilles' tomb provides a more convenient means of viewing. The area surrounding the tomb is shaped "in the manner of a theater" (1125). The spectacle of Polyxena's willingness to meet death moves and strikes the minds of all the onlookers (1146, 1153). They marvel and feel pity (1148). While this image may appeal to an Aristotelian theory of tragedy, for the Stoics, pity is an emotion to be avoided (*On Mercy* 2.4.4–6.4). Seneca's reception of Euripides in *Epistle* 115 only highlights the difficulties inherent in interpreting his tragedies as simple pieces of Stoic morality. In fact, Seneca's portrayal of Euripidean drama, with the author guiding his audience's interpretation during a performance that ends with the punishment of vice, is the inverse of our experience with Senecan tragedy. The contrast may highlight the need for critical spectatorship. With Seneca's plays, the audience must provide its own answers.

Euripides only appears one other time in the *Moral Epistles*. Seneca refers to him as "that tragic poet" and cites in Latin a line from his *Phoenician Women*, "the language of truth is simple" (*Moral Epistles* 49.12 = *Phoenician Women* 469). Finally, references to Euripides can be found in two of Seneca's earlier works. In the *Consolation to his Mother Helvia*, Seneca appears to allude to Euripides' *Alcestis* (*To Helvia* 19.5 = *Alcestis* 445–54; Mazzoli (1970) 174). In the *Apocolocyntosis*, a satire on the death and deification of the emperor Claudius, Seneca quotes in Greek a line from Euripides' lost *Cresphontes* (*Apocolocyntosis* 4.2 = Eur. Frag. 449.4 Nauck).

2 *Madness of Hercules*

As Brad Inwood remarks, Seneca bases his philosophical thought primarily in Latin rather than Greek and on contemporary Roman concepts and concerns (Inwood (1995) 66–7; 74–6). The same can be said about his drama. Though based on a form invented by the Greeks, Senecan drama is also thoroughly grounded in Latin thought and literature. Though his material comes from Greek myth, it takes on new importance in a Roman and, specifically, an imperial context. The arbitrary and violent power of rulers is portrayed in each play. Similarly, the wrath of Juno (*Madness of Hercules*), the fall of Troy (*Trojan Women*), and the fratricidal strife of civil war (*Phoenician Women*) are problems that lie at the core of Roman identity. Following the traditional order of the plays, ultimately dating back to the earliest surviving manuscript, Senecan tragedy "begins" with the angry Juno giving a monologue in *Madness of Hercules* that starts with the queen of the gods recounting the harm done to her by Jupiter's frequent liaisons with his "mistresses." (On Euripides' *Heracles*, see Marshall in this volume.) Although Euripides' *Heracles* begins with the explanatory monologue of Amphitryon, in general terms, Seneca's divine prologue can be related to other Euripidean plays. In particular, Juno's

declaration of her identity in the opening lines can be compared to Dionysus in the *Bachhae* or Aphrodite in *Hippolytus* (Billerbeck (1999) 186). At the same time, Seneca's choice of character likely moves the audience out of the world of classical drama. As John Fitch points out:

> Hera does not appear as a dramatis persona in classical Greek tragedy, but there is a postclassical example in the alternative prologue of the *Rhesus*, preserved in the hypothesis · · · one cannot therefore argue a priori against her appearance in a Hellenistic or Republican Herculesplay.
>
> (Fitch (1987) 44 n.57)

Even if Seneca is following an earlier dramatic source, such as the *Amphitryon* of the Republican playwright Accius (Billerbeck (1999) 23–4), the opening words of Seneca's Juno strongly recall her portrayal in Augustan epic. Seneca's play begins:

> Sister of the Thunder (for only this name remains for me), I have abandoned Jove, who is always another's, and, widow that I am, I have abandoned the temples of the highest aether. Driven from the heavens I have given my place to his mistresses; I must dwell on the earth, because his mistresses hold the sky.
>
> (*Madness of Hercules* 1–5)

The wrath of Juno is the key theme of Vergil's *Aeneid*. Juno's anger is mentioned twice in the first eleven lines (1.4, 11). More specifically, Seneca's opening lines echo the speech of Juno in book one of Vergil's *Aeneid*, which are in fact the first lines spoken in the epic, "But I, who walk as a queen among the gods, and am Jupiter's sister and wife · · ·" (Vergil *Aeneid* 1.46–7). Yet Seneca was not the first poet to build his Juno on a Vergilian base. In the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid's Juno outlines Jupiter's infidelity and points out the reality of her traditional title: "If I am a queen and Jupiter's sister and wife—I'm certainly his sister" (*Metamorphoses* 3.365–6).

In the play's next scene, Seneca engages directly with Euripides while combining the Euripidean material with Augustan material. In the brief opening Chorus of Euripides' *Heracles* (106–137), the old men of Thebes encourage themselves to come to the aid of Heracles' family in spite of the weakness and pains of their advanced years. Seneca's lengthy opening Chorus (125–201) is not based on Euripides' *Heracles*, however. It is taken from the opening Chorus of Euripides' *Phaethon*, which now survives only in fragments. The themes of the opening three stanzas of Euripides' Chorus are considerably expanded by Seneca as he incorporates material from Vergil, Horace, and Ovid. The first Chorus of Euripides' *Phaethon* begins:

> Already the Dawn, just appearing (drives her chariot) over the earth, and above my head (the Chorus) of the Pleiades (has fled); the nightingale sings her subtle harmony in the trees, awake at dawn with her lament of many tears for "Itys, Itys."
>
> (Collard and Cropp, trans.)

Seneca's Chorus also describes the coming dawn and the disappearance of the stars, but as

John Fitch points out in his commentary, Seneca incorporates language from Ovid's story of Phaeton from book two of the *Metamorphoses* (Fitch (1987) 159; *Madness of Hercules* 125, 128, 135 and *Metamorphoses* 2.114–19). Both Euripides and Seneca mention the lamenting nightingale. Seneca's reference to the bird as the "Thracian concubine" (*Madness of Hercules* 149) echoes Juno's opening complaints against Jupiter's mistresses who have replaced her (*Madness of Hercules* 4, 5). In addition, Seneca's language also recalls Ovid's narration of the gruesome story of Philomela. After being raped and tortured by her brotherinlaw Tereus, Philomela sees herself as her sister's rival (*Metamorphoses* 6.605–6; cf. *Metamorphoses* 6.537–8).

The next two stanzas of the Euripidean Chorus describes in generalized terms the activities of three different groups beginning their day of work, herdsmen, hunters and sailors (71–86). Seneca also describes the onset of the working day, "hard labor arises and stirs up every care and opens up houses" (*Madness of Hercules* 125–6). The phrase "hard labor" recalls Vergil's famous description from the *Georgics* of how hard labor has taken over every aspect of modern life, "persistent labor conquered everything, and poverty pushing its way into hard affairs" (*Georgics* 1.145–46; cf. 2.410–13). Further Augustan precedents for describing the various manners of rural life can also be found in Horace's *Odes* (1.1.7–28; 1.3.9–12). Thus, the opening two scenes of *Madness of Hercules* illustrate how Seneca selects and "Romanizes" his Greek material. It is difficult to find "pure" Euripidean elements. Even when we know he is working directly with a passage from Euripides such as the *Phaethon* Chorus, Seneca does not simply translate, but mixes in Vergil, Horace, and Ovid. Euripides' happy pastoral idyll and wedding hymn takes a sinister turn. Along with the sorrowful "Thracian concubine" Philomela, the bloody power of the Maenads also seems to be awakened, "now the thickets made famous by the Cadmean Bacchants grow red with the day scattered upon them" (134–5). These undertones of violence and of hard work illustrate another important theme in Senecan tragedy, the denial of the purity of the pastoral world, and the impossible ideal of the golden age (Schiesaro (2006)). In fact, Hercules' madness begins as he prays for a return to this ideal (926–940). Whereas the Chorus spoke in Vergilian terms about the "hard labor" of country life, Hercules prays, "let the labor of the innocent country use all iron/and let swords be hidden away" (930–31).

The final two stanzas of the Euripides' *Phaethon* Chorus, which celebrate the coming wedding day, are abandoned entirely by Seneca. Instead, the final lines conclude with an exhortation to "live happily while the fates allow" (178). More specifically, the Chorus critiques Hercules' untimely descent into Hades, "With an excessively strong breast, Alcides,/you hasten to see the sad shades of the dead" (187–8). The Chorus relegates the life of heroic glory to "another" (192–3) in favor of a possibly Epicurean inspired wish to "live secretly" (197–8). The Chorus concludes with the warning, "spirited courage falls from a great height" (201).

As Kathleen Riley ((2008) 14–34) points out, Euripides skillfully divides his *Heracles* into two distinct halves in order to highlight the difference between the sane and mad Heracles. The terrifyingly sudden appearance of Lyssa (madness personified) and Iris dramatically portrays the external and godsent origins of Heracles' insanity (822–74). The messenger succinctly encapsulates the transformation that this madness creates. Heracles is no longer himself (931).

He then describes the physical effects. Heracles' face is distorted, his eyes roll and are bloodshot, he foams at the mouth and laughs like one who has been struck out of his wits (932–5). By contrast, Seneca's Hercules play begins with the theme of divine madness. In addition to Juno's presence at the start of the play, Hercules' madness also appears to come from within. The opening Chorus concludes with a critique of Hercules' excessive manly valor (201). Juno realizes that the only way to defeat Hercules is to draw out the hubristic tendencies that already lie within him:

> You seek Alcides' equal? There is no one except the man himself: let him wage war with himself · · · go now, overly proud man, seek the regions of the heavendwelling gods, look down on human things.
>
> (84–5; 89–90)

Juno's calling up of the Furies to afflict Hercules echoes *Aeneid* 7.290–460, where she calls on Allecto to drive Amata and Turnus mad to break the treaty with the Trojans. There is a significant difference in Seneca, however. Before driving Hercules mad, Juno herself must be driven mad first. She calls on the Furies to overturn her mind (108–12). This act signals an important theme in Senecan drama. His characters frequently exhort themselves to follow their passions (Gill (1997), Star (2006) and Star (2012) 62–83).

The onset of Hercules' madness comes after he refuses Amphitryon's advice to purify himself and rest after his labors (918–19; 924–6). Instead, Hercules immediately sacrifices and begins a prayer that is "worthy of himself and of Jupiter" (926–7). Hercules prays for the return of the golden age, but once he wishes that whatever monster remains on earth "be his," madness sets in (938–40). Just as Juno predicted, Hercules begins to "attack" the heavens (955–86; cf. 89–90). After he regains his sanity, Hercules understands and regrets his excessive courage. Echoing the opening Chorus he laments, "o breast excessively wild" (1226; cf. 187–8). These passages reveal how different Seneca's play is from Euripides'. Seneca has built his play from a wealth of sources, both Euripidean and Augustan. In Euripides' version, Heracles' madness comes after the divine epiphany of Iris and Lyssa in the middle of the play. Seneca opens his play with the anger of Juno, who must paradoxically be driven mad by the Furies before Hercules can be after his return from the underworld.

3 *Trojan Women*

Unlike the majority of Seneca's plays, there is no central figure in the *Trojan Women* (see also Rabinowitz in this volume). Instead, this play contains Seneca's largest cast of characters and focuses on the interactions between the Greeks and Trojans (Boyle (1994) 33). The plight of the aged Hecuba frames the play. At its core lie the struggles to prevent the inevitable slaughter of the Trojan youths, Polyxena and Astyanax. Thus, Seneca's *Trojan Women* combines major elements from two separate Euripidean plays. At the start of Euripides' *Trojan Women*, Polyxena has already been killed at Achilles' tomb, as Poseidon announces (39–40). Talthybius darkly alludes to Polyxena's fate (264), which is finally made clear by Andromache (622–3). In this play only Astyanax is killed. Whereas Seneca describes his death in detail

(1065–1164), Euripides only notes in a brief relative clause that he was thrown from the city's walls (1134). Euripides then focuses on the burial of Astyanax with Hector's shield by Hecuba (1153–1206). This element is entirely absent from Seneca's play. The narration of the death of Polyxena has its Euripidean antecedent in *Hecuba* (518–82). Euripides grants Polyxena two relatively lengthy pieces of dialogue, one to Odysseus (342–78) and the other as reported by Talthybius before her death (547–52; 563–5). Thus, it would appear that in this play Seneca has brought together two Euripidean plays in the way that the Roman comic playwrights Plautus and Terence frequently incorporated key elements from separate Greek plays. Following this line of thought, it might seem that Seneca's love of prolonged descriptions of violence, particularly violence against the young, led him to combine the deaths of Astyanax and Polyxena into one play. The more decorous Euripides instead preferred to relegate them to two separate plays. Yet seeing Seneca's *Trojan Women* simply as a clumsy and macabre combination of Euripides does not do justice to the skill with which Seneca represents the ageold theme of Troy's fall. In this play Seneca grapples with two paradoxical themes. The finality of the destruction of human life along with the walled citadel of Troy is yoked with the problem of repetition, as ghosts of the dead reappear and make their demands upon the living.

Euripides' *Trojan Women* opens with Poseidon identifying himself and then describing the desolation of Troy (1–44). Hecuba lies silently prostrate on the ground (36–7). Seneca's play opens with Hecuba's description of Troy (6–34), but the focus of her first lines is on the instability of fortune and the lesson to be learned by looking upon her and her city's plight (1–6).

Euripides' Hecuba expresses a similar sentiment about the instability of human fortune; but these lines come at the end of his play (1203–6). As if to stress his belated position in the literary tradition, Seneca begins where Euripides' play ends. This generalized picture of the instability of fortune gives way to a more specific vision of the repetitive destiny of Troy. The Chorus describes how it has been sacked twice (133–7; cf. Euripides' *Trojan Women* (809–19)). Later, the Chorus focuses on the finality of death, claiming that the spirit leaves the body just like smoke from a fire, "after death there is nothing and death itself is nothing" (392–8). This image of the soul as evanescent smoke resonates with the Chorus' closing description of how the captive Trojan women will only briefly be able to indentify Troy to their children as they sail away by the smoke that creeps high into the sky (1050–5).

The theme of repetition continues in the second act as Talthybius reports how Achilles demands the sacrifice of Polyxena. His ghost looks the same as he did at the height of his martial prowess (181–89). Once again his anger creates strife among the Greeks (190). In the second part of act two an introspective and sympathetic Agamemnon attempts stop the cycle of bloodshed and deny Achilles' and his son Pyrrhus' demands. Echoing Hecuba's opening warning, the fall of Troy has demonstrated to Agamemnon the fragility of good fortune and the need for the victor to consider how easily the plight of the vanquished could be his own (259–66). He unsuccessfully attempts to check Pyrrhus' demand for the sacrifice of Polyxena. The validity of Agamemnon's insights are in turn checked by his past history. As Pyrrhus rebukes him, "now you believe it a crime to sacrifice a virgin?" (331). Indeed, the Greeks can only leave Troy by not only repeating, but doubling the crimes of the past (360–70).

The horror of this double slaughter is amplified in act three, the core of which is devoted to the struggle between Ulysses trying to find Astyanax and Andromache trying to keep him hidden safely in Hector's tomb. This *agōn* aptly illustrates the changes in Seneca's reception history. In the seventeenth century, John Dryden called it the finest scene in Senecan drama, and one that equals Shakespeare (Boyle (1983) 1). In the late twentieth century, however, William Calder called it "long and occasionally comic" (Calder (1970) 75). Whether we find it an example of high pathos and drama or simply ridiculous, this scene highlights the differences between Seneca's and Euripides' *Trojan Women* in terms of content and dramatic technique. Odysseus does not appear in Euripides' *Trojan Women*. Talthybius announces that Odysseus convinced the Greeks that Astyanax must be killed (721). This scene in Seneca may have been influenced by Euripides' *Hecuba*, where Odysseus struggles with Hecuba to lead off Polyxena. The contrast with Euripides' play is marked, however. In *Hecuba*, the Chorus leader announces Odysseus' arrival with "an eager foot" (216). When he arrives he boldly addresses Hecuba (218–28). Seneca's Ulysses comes slowly, with a "hesitating step" (522). He takes neither joy nor credit for demanding Astyanax, attributing it to "all the Greeks and their leaders" (524–8), and to the prophet Calchas (533–5). In fact, Ulysses is initially so reluctant to seize Astyanax that he believes Andromache's claim that her son has died (597).

Throughout this scene, Ulysses and Andromache repeatedly talk to themselves in extended asides. This dramatic technique is one of Seneca's favorites, but it is largely absent from extant fifthcentury Attic tragedy (Tarrant (1978) 242–43). At first, Seneca's Ulysses does not live up to his reputation and he is initially deceived by Andromache's lie that her child has died. Seemingly eager to avoid the slaughtering of more Trojans, Ulysses tells Andromache that he will happily convey this news to the Greeks. Then, in a lengthy aside, he corrects himself and demands that he get back into character and become the "wily Ulysses" (607–18). The play that almost ended at line 606 can now continue. When Ulysses speaks again to Andromache, he "congratulates" her for the fact that her son will be spared the "cruel death" of being hurled from Troy's surviving walls. This revelation causes Andromache admit her fear to herself (623–4). Ulysses realizes that she trembles at his words and then orders himself to keep attacking Andromache's fear (625–6). He is convinced that the boy must still be alive. After Ulysses lies about Calchas' claim that Hector's tomb must be destroyed and his ashes scattered, Andromache debates with herself about whom to save in two asides (642–62; 686–91). Although she convinces herself to save Astyanax, she is nevertheless defeated by Ulysses' threats and calls the boy out from Hector's tomb.

On the one hand, the extended asides in this scene may illustrate T.S. Eliot's critique that Senecan drama is "all in the word, and the word has no further reality behind it" (Eliot (1932) 54). Indeed, this scene demonstrates Seneca's love of rhetoric, and, in Andromache's case, his ability to present both sides of an argument in an equally powerful and convincing way, as she debates with herself whether to protect Hector's tomb or her son. These asides are more than rhetorical showpieces, however; nor are they detached from the overall development of the play. In his "metapoetic" aside, Ulysses orders himself to get back into character. He then verbally assaults Andromache with his full bag of tricks. Andromache is granted the same ability to steel herself against the attack. Seneca uses this postclassical dramatic technique to

display the psychological struggle that lies beneath Andromache's and Ulysses' verbal struggle.

While this scene may be an example of the excesses of "Silver Latin" and the declamatory tastes of Seneca's day, it also subtly probes the links between Trojan and Roman identity. For a Roman audience this story would have particular resonance, as the destruction of Troy ultimately led to the founding of Rome by Aeneas. The death of Hector and his son lie in opposition to the survival of Aeneas and the continuation of his line through his son Iulus down to the JulioClaudians of Seneca's day. Although Rome is never explicitly mentioned, Roman ideas are mixed into the Greek myth. As she hands her son over to Ulysses, Andromache laments the life that Astyanax has lost.

> You will not give laws to the people, and you will not send conquered races under the yoke · · · Nor on the appointed ceremonial day, reenacting the solemn rite of the Trojan Game, will you lead the swift horseman as their prince.
>
> (772–3; 777–9; cf. Hecuba's claim in Euripides' *Trojan Women* (1209–1215) that Astyanax will never win a victory with horses or with a bow)

Andromache's sad claim that her son will not give laws to nations echoes Vergil's description of Augustus, "Great Caesar thunders in war on the banks of the Euphrates and the victor gives laws to willing peoples" (Vergil *Georgics* 4.560–3; see also Vergil *Aeneid* 1.292, 6.851–53, Horace *Odes* 3.3.43, and Boyle (1994) 199). Similarly, the "Trojan Game" is performed by Aeneas' son and his peers during the funeral games of Anchises (Vergil *Aeneid* 5.545). This game was revived again at the end of the Roman Republic. According to Suetonius, Augustus decreed it to be a regular event (Suetonius *Life of Augustus* 43.2). For the Romans, Troy did not dissolve like the smoke rising from its ashes. Rather, it was reborn at Rome. Nevertheless, the play's focus on destruction and instability trouble any hopes for Rome's stability and permanence. In fact, the next play under investigation highlights the inevitable results of Rome's founding: the horrors of civil war.

4 *Phoenician Women*

Seneca's *Phoenician Women* is lacking a Chorus, a fact which has led most scholars to believe that it is incomplete. (On Euripides' play, see Lamari in this volume.) The play is divided into two parts, one which focuses on Oedipus and Antigone, the other on Jocasta's attempts to stop the war between her children, Eteocles and Polynices. Several models for Seneca's play have been suggested. On one hand, it appears as if Seneca has grafted elements from Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* and *Oedipus at Colonus* onto to Euripides' *Phoenician Women* (Frank (1995) 16–25). As Marcia Frank points out in her commentary, however, the links to any of these three Greek plays are not particularly strong (Frank (1995) 20; 24). Although this play is likely incomplete, there is thematic unity in the extant passages. In this play Seneca investigates the problems of guilt and innocence as well as the role of the core Roman virtue of *pietas*, sacred duty to country, gods, and family. These problems become unsolvable riddles within the context of Oedipus' "family romance" and in the fratricidal war between his sons. Thus the

Greek myth is used to deal with Roman problems, specifically those of civil war and the struggle for absolute power.

By treating Oedipus first, Seneca inverts the order of Euripides' play. Oedipus the exile and his daughter Antigone appear at the start of Seneca's play, while in Euripides they are reserved until the end (1539–1764). Seneca employs this scene to focus on two themes that recur throughout his tragedies, suicide and the witnessing of crimes that outdo those of the past. Oedipus is resolved to kill himself (44–7; 89–181). Antigone repeatedly exhorts him to resist and fight against this desire (77–9; 182–215; 298–94). Antigone states that her father should consider himself innocent. Instead, Oedipus recounts the guilt he incurred by remaining "faithful" to the Delphic oracle (259). The focus of the play then shifts to the impending battle between Polynices and Eteocles. Antigone urges her father to help prevent the war between his children (288–94). A messenger appears and also exhorts Oedipus to do the same (320–7). Rather than helping, Oedipus revels in the fact that his children are following his example (331–2). The coming civil war causes Oedipus to praise and "recognize" his children (332). Oedipus calls on them to prove their "nobility" by surpassing his own "glory" and "fame" (334–6). Oedipus and his family have inverted all of these ideals. He hopes that his sons' crimes will surpass those of the father.

> Civil war is still not enough: let brother rush against brother. Nor is this enough: what ought to happen, so that a crime in accordance with my character and one that befits my marriage may happen, let them give weapons to their mother!
>
> (354–8)

The first two lines echo the opening of the epic poem by Seneca's nephew Lucan on the civil war between Julius Caesar and Pompey Magnus, "Wars, greater than civil wars across the Emathian plains, and law given to crime we sing" (Lucan *Civil War* 1.1–2). Oedipus' final wish that his sons give weapons to their mother may be a reference to Euripides' play. After Eteocles and Polynices have killed each other, Jocasta runs to the battlefield and kills herself with a sword (1457–9). Anticipating such horrors, Seneca's Oedipus states that he will hide in the woods and caves and try to listen to the "brothers' cruel war" (361–2).

The opening of the second half develops the theme of inherited guilt, as Jocasta declares how her own guilt has been passed on to her children (367–9). The civil strife between her children has rendered the proper performance of familial duty impossible. As she says, "I can do nothing dutifully while at the same time preserving my duty" (380–1). The only solution is for Jocasta to place herself between her sons in order to determine which one acts properly toward his mother (407–11). As the play now stands, the audience is left hanging. Unlike in Euripides' play, the battle is never joined. Jocasta rushes between her two sons in an attempt to stop their fratricidal slaughter. The final lines of Seneca's play offers yet another example of how Greek drama can be transformed in its Roman context. The play breaks off with Eteocles and Polynices exchanging lines about the proper nature of kingship. Polynices states that if Eteocles does not lay down his crown and let his brother rule as promised, then he will be hated by his people (653). Eteocles counters, "he does not wish to rule, who fears to be hated. The god who created the universe placed these two things together: hatred and kingship" (654–

6). In the final two lines Polynices asks his brother if he will be willing to overstep the bounds of *pietas* and give his fatherland, ancestral gods and wife over to the flames (663). To which Eteocles answers, “Imperial power is well purchased at any price at all” (664).

The final line of the play is likely Seneca’s rendering of Euripides’ Eteocles’ statement about power, “If it is necessary to do wrong, then it is most right to do so for the sake of power, but in all other things it is necessary to respect the gods” (524–5). Seneca was not the first Roman to be fascinated by these lines. According to Cicero, Julius Caesar always had these Greek lines on his lips (*On Duties* 3.82). Writing after a few decades after Seneca, Suetonius also references Caesar’s quote (*Divine Julius* 30). Indeed, if we can believe this tradition, Seneca’s Eteocles not only quotes Euripides, but also Caesar, the man who brought civil war and autocracy to Rome. Seneca’s play goes to the heart of the tension between sacred duty and the pursuit of absolute power. Questions concerning the cost of seeking absolute power remain unresolved. Thus, if this play is indeed unfinished, it can be grouped together with other unfinished accounts of civil war in Roman literature. Julius Caesar’s commentaries on the civil war break off with events in Alexandria. During the Neronian period two more unfinished civil wars were written. Lucan’s epic ends at the same point as Caesar’s commentaries. In Petronius’ *Satyricon*, the poetaster Eumolpus recites his poem on the same theme, which he claims has not yet received the “final touches” (118.6). The unfinished state of Seneca’s play may make a political and ethical point. The horrors of civil war are too great to be narrated.

5 *Medea*

As noted by Ulrich von WilamowitzMoellendorff, Seneca’s Medea has read Euripides’ play (Schiesaro (2003) 18; see also Swift in this volume). From the start, Seneca’s Medea develops her revenge with a concern for how her tale will be told (53–4). She famously states that she will become Medea (171). After killing her first child, she declares that she has fulfilled her promise, “now I am Medea” (910). Seneca’s Medea takes on the role of dramaturge, creating herself and the play before the eyes of the horrified spectators within the play, whom she demands must “approve” of her work, and “recognize” her (977; 1021). Yet what “Medea” does she become? Several elements that are central to Euripides’ play, such as the Chorus’ sympathy with Medea, and Aegeus’ promise to help her, are absent in Seneca’s play. By contrast, Seneca’s Medea is isolated. She looks to her own mythical selfimage for strength and inspiration. The self she creates, based on witchcraft and theatricalized violence, is very different than that of her Euripidean ancestor. Thus, Wilamowitz’s statement deserves modification. Seneca’s Medea has not ignored the intervening five hundred years of literary tradition. The opening of Seneca’s play marks its distance from Euripides, whose play begins with the Nurse wishing that the Argo had never set sail. In the first line of Seneca’s play, Medea invokes the gods of the wedding, and she ends her monologue by swearing revenge for her divorce (53–4). The opening Chorus is a wedding hymn in celebration of Jason’s new union (56–115). Seneca’s inspiration for beginning with Jason’s wedding may have come from Ovid’s *Heroines* 12, in which Medea also hears the hymn to Hymen (Ovid *Heroines* 12.137–8; *Medea* 116).

While the theme of Medea's magical abilities is present in Euripides' play (e.g. 384–5; 396–7; 718; 1125), it is given elaborate treatment in the Hellenistic and Roman tradition. There is a particular focus on her gathering and preparing exotic materials. Apollonius' *Voyage of the Argo* describes Medea's preparation of the "Promethean charm" at the shrine of Hecate (3.828–70). In the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid gives a lengthy narration of her incantation to Hecate (7.192–219), as well as her travels via snake chariot throughout Thessaly in order to gather herbs to make a potion that will restore Jason's father's youth (7.220–37). In Ovid's *Heroines* 6, Jason's other abandoned bride, Hypsipyle, writes that he only could have fallen in love with Medea because she bewitched him (6.131–32). Similarly, Seneca's play contains a lengthy description of Medea's preparation of the poison she will use to kill Creon and his daughter (670–843). Whereas Euripides' play gives an elaborate description of the results of the poison, Seneca minimizes them. The messenger briefly notes that Creon and his daughter were destroyed by Medea's gifts (881–82). Furthermore, in Euripides' version, Medea's poisoned crown burst into flames around Jason's bride's head. In Seneca, the entire palace bursts into magical flames, which water only strengthens (885–90).

In Euripides' play the children are killed offstage. Not only does Seneca's Medea kill her first child before the audience, and the second child in front of Jason, but she also threatens to search out her womb with a sword and kill any child that may be gestating (1009–13). Seneca's play revels in public violence, a theme that is suppressed in other versions. For example, Seneca's Medea fulfills the horrors that lie unspoken at the end of Ovid's *Heroines* 12. Medea concludes her letter to Jason, "I shall follow wherever anger leads · · · my mind is developing something great" (209; 212). Seneca demonstrates his awareness of these lines. His Medea similarly states, "my wild soul within has decided on something and it does not yet dare confess it to itself" (917–19). Before declaring her intent to kill her children, she again echoes Ovid's Medea, "anger, I follow where you lead" (953). The potential for violence at the end of Ovid's *Heroines* 12 is realized at the end of Seneca's play. Hence, we see that Seneca highlights two themes that are minimized in Euripides. Medea the witch became an important part of the later tradition. This theme is dutifully picked up and developed by Seneca. The spectacle of infanticidal violence may be Seneca's innovation.

6 *Phaedra*

Traditionally, scholars assumed that Seneca's *Phaedra* was closely based on Euripides' first, unsuccessful version of *Hippolytus*, which is now lost (Zintzen (1960); see also Ebbott in this volume). Seneca's Phaedra's "aggressiveness" and her facetoface meeting with Hippolytus are seen to be key parallels. The work of Charles Segal has treated the links between Seneca's play and the surviving version of Euripides' *Hippolytus*. He asserts that the ghost of Euripides haunts every line in this play (Segal (1986) 203). Scholars have also noted that this play is infused with themes from Latin pastoral and love elegy (Littlewood (2004) 260). Phaedra's opening speech contains several echoes of the heroine's letter in Ovid's *Heroines* 4 (Tarrant (1978) 262). As Cedric Littlewood has demonstrated, Hippolytus' sexual innocence is undercut by his ignorance of the literary tradition of the vulnerability of the pastoral world to

the effects of love and of the erotic connotations of the hunt (Littlewood (2004) 259–301). Nevertheless, the impossibility of a pure landscape is one of the key themes in Euripides' *Hippolytus*. At the opening of the drama, Hippolytus presents the statue of Artemis with a garland from an "untouched meadow (73–74). This image is recalled later in the play in a sexualized context. Because of her love for Hippolytus, Phaedra wishes to follow him into the country and lie "in the uncut meadow" (208–11). At the end of the play Artemis prophesizes that young maidens from Troezen will cut their hair for Hippolytus before their wedding (1423–30; Reckford (1972) 416).

Thus, Hippolytus' tragic vision of the countryside as a place that is sexually pure is central to both Euripides' and Seneca's plays. The main shift can be found in the portrayal of geography. The core image that opens Euripides' play, Hippolytus' honoring of Artemis with a wreath from a small, protected virgin meadow, is dwarfed in comparison with the geographical tour that opens Seneca's play. Seneca's Hippolytus prays to Diana noting her power over all beasts and regions of the globe. The animals that drink the cold Araxes and the Hister, the Gaetulian lions and the deer of Crete, creatures known to the rich Arabs or the needy Garamantians, the nomad Sarmatians, or those on the ridges of the Pyrenees or the forests of Hyrcania are all under her power (58–61; 67–72).

At the end of Seneca's play, there is no divine epiphany or reconciliation between father and son, but the themes of the meadow and of cutting remain. Theseus must ask for help in gathering and reassembling Hippolytus' lacerated body parts from across the fields (1247–79). This final scene is not simply a grotesque version of Euripides' conclusion. While in the past critics have condemned this scene for containing the worst line in Senecan drama (1267; Coffey and Mayer (1990) 195), it contains several complex resonances. The gruesome rending of Hipploytus at the end of Seneca's play is more in line with the conclusion of Euripides' *Bacchae* than with his *Hippolytus*. The gathering of Hippolytus' body parts also recalls Seneca's description of the process of composition as one of gathering pieces from across the literary field to assemble a new body (*Epistle* 84.1–6). Furthermore, Theseus' self apostrophe to "gather the scattered limbs" of his son (1256) echoes Horace's famous line about the "scattered limbs of the poet" (*Satire* 1.4.62).

7 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter we have highlighted Senecan tragedy's intertextual relationship with Euripides and Latin poets from the Augustan age. To borrow his own metaphor, Seneca was a master at picking "flowers" from the vast literary field that lay before him and weaving them into his own texts (Coffey and Mayer (1990) 197–203). Yet complex literary citation and allusion are not the only defining characteristics of Senecan tragedy. We can conclude by pointing out another, and note how Senecan tragedy links the internal with the external world. Hippolytus' body, scattered across the landscape he once dominated as a hunter, graphically reveals the links Senecan tragedy establishes between the "insides" of the individual and the outside world. His plays move from descriptions of the cosmos and the vastness of the earth's geography to the inner reaches of the souls of its characters (Tarrant (1995) 229). As Thomas

Rosenmeyer remarks, the Stoic theory of *symphatheia,* that human morality and psychology can affect the cosmos, pervades Senecan tragedy. He writes, "the invasion of the psychological realm by language originally devised to plumb physical and biological processes is the most important contribution Seneca made to the development of European drama" (Rosenmeyer (1989) 132). Seneca uses this link between world and self to contrast the vastness of the cosmos with individual confinement and entrapment. The opening scenes of *Phaedra* aptly illustrate this phenomenon. Hippolytus prays to Diana noting her power over all beasts and regions of the globe. The worship of Diana ensures that all of these widewandering beasts will be held fast in nets and unable to break through snares (75–6). Then, the isolated and alone Phaedra prays to the vastness of the sea and the dominion of Crete, her distant homeland (85–88). The terrestrial world is then moved inside of Phaedra, whose passion burns like vapor billowing from Mount Aetna (101–03; Segal (1986) 45–48).

In *Phaedra* and the other plays under investigation, as the boundaries of the self are torn apart by the passions, so is the terrestrial world. The vastness and ever expandingpotential of human passion is paralleled by the globe itself. The boundaries of the earth are broken in order to reveal Achilles' continuing anger in the *Trojan Women*. Hercules and Theseus return from the underworld only to bring destruction to their households in *Madness of Hercules* and *Phaedra*. Seneca's most celebrated image of the earth opening up comes in *Medea*. The Chorus prophesizes:

> In later years the age will come during which Ocean will loosen the chains of the world, and a great land will lie open to view, and Tethys will uncover new worlds, and Thule will not be the furthest of lands.
>
> (375–9)

There is perhaps no better image for how Senecan drama takes a genre that was originally part of the civic rituals of Athens, and transforms it to deal with the problems and anxieties of living in "an empire without end" (Vergil *Aeneid* 1.279). The reception history of Senecan tragedy, in favor during the Renaissance and again today, suggests that he resonates most powerfully at times of heightened difficulties in reconciling the place of the individual within the complexity of the world and the vastness of the cosmos.

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FURTHER READING

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For works specifically dealing with Seneca and Euripides, see Segal (1984) and (1986), Fantham (1986), Ohlander (1989) and Papadopoulou (2004). The collection of essays edited by Fitch (2008) is a good starting place to see the range of work that has been done on the Senecan corpus. The work of Herington (1966; 1982) was seminal for starting the current rehabilitation Seneca is experiencing. Booklength studies of Senecan tragedy include Pratt (1983), Henry (1985), Dupont (1995), Schiesaro (2003), Littlewood (2004), and Trinacty (2014). For an investigation of Seneca’s theory of tragedy and its influence on Renaissance thought, see Staley (2010). For those interested in Stoicism and Senecan tragedy, see Nussbaum (1994), Bartsch (2006), Star (2006), (2012), and (2016).

There are also several recent collections of essays which treat the entire Senecan corpus, including, Volk and Williams (2006), Bartsch and Wray (2009) and Bartsch and Schiesaro (2015). Those interested in Seneca’s influence on Renaissance drama can consult Braden (1985), Miola (1992), and Boyle (1997). For biographies, see Griffin (1992), Veyne (2003), Romm (2014), and Wilson (2014). Ker (2009) investigates the role of death in the Senecan corpus as well as the reception of his death scene. Star (2017) provides an overview of Seneca’s life, works, and reception.

CHAPTER 36
All Aboard the Bacchae Bus: Reception of Euripides in the Twentieth and Twentyfirst Centuries

Barbara Goff

According to a prominent recent commentator, "A thorough treatment of the reception of Euripides would require a whole volume to itself" (Mastronarde (2010) 1). The brief of this concluding chapter is to consider the reception of Euripidean drama in the twentieth and twentyfirst centuries only, but even though the latter century is not very old, the task is daunting enough. Happily, the immense pleasure of Euripidean drama, as refracted through its latest avatars, renders the task inviting. In this chapter I shall first sketch the shifts in critical opinions on Euripidean drama, over the last hundred years or so, before moving to more detailed considerations of the ways that translations, performances, and adaptations have marked the period. I shall end with a closer focus on recent versions of *Hippolytos*, *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, and *Bacchae*. The target audience of this *Companion* suggests that my focus should be largely Englishlanguage and Anglocentric, but I hope my conclusions may have some resonance beyond those boundaries. I shall suggest that while Euripidean drama entered the twentieth century largely as the sign of everything "classical tragedy" was not, the intervening decades have redefined both Euripides and the classical so that not only have they moved closer, but the "classical" is now understood in highly Euripidean terms. Whereas the commentators of the early twentieth century often seem to have been baffled by what they encountered in Euripidean drama, the ideological shifts of the twentieth century have given a new power to some of its prominent themes, and the turn to performance in recent decades has helped towards an understanding of some of its formal qualities.

1 Criticism and Translation

In the early part of the twentieth century Euripidean drama was under the shadow of nineteenthcentury critics like Schlegel and Nietzsche, who condemned both playwright and plays for an unlikely combination of decadence and incompetence. Even other dramatic writers, like Schiller and Swinburne, added their voices to the Chorus of disapproval. While these critical opinions were largely determined by the ideological assumptions of the nineteenth century that discerned rise, perfection, and fall in all cultural developments—leaving Euripides, as third of the canonical tragedians, to be the fall guy—it was also the genuinely difficult aspects of Euripidean dramaturgy which provoked such criticism. These include, as will be obvious from the discussions throughout this *Companion*, formal and structural characteristics, generic experimentation, moral equivocation, aspects of the rhetoric, the relationship to contemporary politics, the relationship to contemporary religion, the representation of traditional heroes as thoroughly problematic, and the overtly untraditional representation of female characters. Although a number of formal studies and historicist

interpretations, in the first half of the twentieth century, began to redress the balance (Mastronarde (2010) 12–15), they too operated within the overall difficulty of having to resist nineteenthcentury scorn. The ironic interpretations of critics like Verrall and Norwood, and to an extent the later Vellacott, indicate how the burden of critical opprobrium could distort even a defensive reading.

In the course of the twentieth century the "problems" in Euripidean dramaturgy were reinterpreted as strengths. How this came about seems to me to be via a combination of ideological changes in the wider context, eventually reflected in the critical sphere, and a new attention to the performance dimension which helped to draw attention to some of the special qualities of Euripidean dramas. While Michelini (1987) is a very good account of earlier critical reception, Mastronarde (2010) updates the story with an appreciation of the more recent shifts in criticism that have readjusted interpretation of Greek tragedy generally and Euripidean drama in particular. By structuralism, deconstruction, feminism, and cultural materialism—which themselves, of course, responded to and formed part of other contemporary political, social, and cultural movements—accounts of Euripidean tragedy were freed from the earlier concentration on biography and naturalism. These had almost inevitably led to negative judgements, but in the second half of the century alternative accounts could be developed which permitted classicists to construct a more usable Euripides than the one they had inherited. Within this more usable Euripides were foregrounded the unsettling preoccupations that also characterize the twentieth century: the effect of warfare on civilians, the claims of hitherto suppressed populations like women and minorities, empire and the displacement of people, secularism, the simultaneous spread and undermining of democracy. All these contemporary concerns were found, by the end of the twentieth century, to inform the drama of Euripides, and in a further twist, they were found to be characteristic of Greek drama generally. Thus even the dramas of Sophocles can now be understood as ambiguous and searching rather than blandly ideal (Scodel (2008)).

Since there is now a convergence of what seems crucial to an understanding of the twentieth century, and what seems crucial to an understanding of Euripidean drama, it might be objected that we are merely finding ourselves when we seek Euripides. This is a very recognizable epistemological difficulty, and one that requires a high degree of selfconsciousness to manage, but I would suggest that audiences and readers are in any case better served by the Euripides who commands a popular audience in the theater and wields considerable fascination elsewhere, than by the incomprehensible grumpy botcher of an earlier imagination. I would also agree with Hall (2004a) that the twentieth century saw real changes, in economics, politics, and culture, all of which have made possible a more thoughtful access to Greek drama. It is no coincidence that the areas Hall singles out as symptomatic of such change —sexuality and gender, the irrational, the secular, and formal experimentation—are those which were already especially identified with Euripidean drama. This suggests again that Euripidean drama, ahead of Sophoclean or Aeschylean, is vital to what we understand by the classical and by its relevance within the twentieth century.

The critics of the nineteenth century had toiled to establish the texts of the dramas, so that the twentieth century could turn its attention to interpretation. During the twentieth century,

scholars such as Diggle, Mastronarde, and Matthiessen continued the textual work, and series such as the Loeb texts and the Cambridge University Press Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics volumes ("green and yellows") made improved texts helpfully accessible to a wider scholarly audience including undergraduates. An important growth area has been that of translation. With changes in education throughout Europe and the United States, the discipline of classics labored to leave behind any trace of elitism and to make itself fully attractive and accessible to those without ancient languages. At the beginning of the twentieth century there were the translations of Euripides by Murray, which deliberately set out to recruit a new audience for the tragedies, and subsequently, numerous important presses have embarked on major translation projects. These often state an explicit intention to make Greek tragedies more accessible to more people, and to produce versions that can be readily staged under contemporary conditions. Sometimes they are composed by prominent poets and gain recognition within a modern literary canon. Within the Englishlanguage industry we might cite the translation series by Penguin, the Oxford World's Classics series, the University of Chicago Press series edited by Lattimore, the translations edited by Slavitt and Bovie for the University of Pennsylvania Press, and Greek Tragedy in New Translations, published by Oxford University Press. Series with Greek and facing translations include Loebs and Aris and Phillips for Englishspeakers, the Classici Antiche (Biblioteca universale Rizzoli) in Italian and the Griechische Dramen (Walter de Gruyter) in German. All of these series include Sophocles and Aeschylus as well as Euripides, but their accessibility has had a recognizable effect on the reception of Euripides.

2 Performances

One other cultural development that has had a huge effect on reception of Euripidean drama, and that in many ways conditions how we currently think about it, is the turn to performance. Within the humanities generally, the study of performance has gained considerable traction, embracing not only "ritual, plays, sports, popular entertainments, the performing arts, and everyday life performances" but also "the enactment of social, professional, gender, race and class roles" (Schechner (2002)2). Conversely, performance studies have helped classicists look at Greek tragedy from new perspectives (Goldhill and Osborne (1999)). More decisively, the actual performance of Greek drama has taken off exponentially, so that productions of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides have become a regular feature of theatrical activity throughout the world. There are several strands to this activity, involving different kinds of institutions large and small. Annual festivals stage ancient dramas in ancient theaters at Epidaurus and Syracuse. University theaters put on Greek plays, in the original or in translation, for a largely academic audience; in Britain these include Oxford, Cambridge, University College London and King's College London, as well as Bradfield College in Berkshire, and in the States Santa Cruz, Wellesley, Bryn Mawr and Smith among others. Perhaps more relevant for the reception of Euripidean drama overall, numerous professional and amateur theaters stage either translations or adaptations of Greek plays for a general audience, and it is this latter phenomenon that has multiplied beyond all recognition in recent decades. This turn to performance is documented by institutions like the Archive for

Performances of Greek and Roman Drama and the European Network of Research and Documentation of Performances of Ancient Greek Drama, and has been discussed critically by a range of important publications (see Further Reading). Although this performance and production activity obviously has relevance for and is attractive to a general audience, it has also been very important to the selfunderstanding of the discipline of classics (Wiles (2010)).

How does Euripidean drama in particular feature within this performance activity? Performances are, as is acknowledged in the critical literature (Martindale (2010) 76–77), quite hard to analyze because they are inherently ephemeral, so that if the writer did not see the production herself, she is reliant on the written or recorded testimony of others, which entails that as much "text" is being analyzed as "performance." The National Theatre in London has a video archive of performances, but not much such material is widely available. That said, we can probably still make a few generalizations about the performance of Euripidean drama, particularly by drawing on the resources of the APGRD, which are invaluable even if not exhaustive. In the last three decades, it shows performances of Euripides easily outnumbering those of Aeschylus and Sophocles. That this is not simply a matter of more Euripidean plays being available, is suggested by the fact that only certain plays of Euripides are ever highly popular, with many other plays being consigned to a very few performances. The sheer overall number of performances, however, suggests that Euripidean drama is especially accessible and significant to wide audiences at the turn of the twentyfirst century. During the twentieth century, a few notable shifts took place. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the translations of Gilbert Murray held sway, and the performed "canon" was very small, involving usually *Alcestis*, *Iphigeneia in Tauris*, and *Hippolytos*. Some of the popularity of the first two may be accounted for by the associated music by Gluck, and it may also be the case that these plays were encountered in the classroom more than others. Yet another explanation may be that Alcestis and Iphigeneia are some of the few "good women" in the Greek tragic corpus. Throughout the teens and twenties of the century there would regularly be multiple productions of *Alcestis* on college campuses in the United States during any one year. After the first decade or so of the century, however, *Medea* and *Trojan Women* began to emerge more frequently, and by the thirties they were well established, along with *Bacchae*, with multiple productions of *Trojan Women* on American college campuses instead of *Alcestis*. It is hard to resist the conclusion that these three plays register the growing tensions of the century, responding to public concern with the emancipation of women, with the irrational, and with the justice of warfare. As I have suggested, when Hall (2004a) cites similar concerns as the drivers behind the great surge in productions post1969, her study implicitly aligns the defining characteristics of Greek tragedy, as it is experienced in the twentieth century, with specifically Euripidean drama. Euripides is thus now at the centre of Greek tragedy rather than being what it is defined against.

In the first half of the twentieth century the performed canon of Euripides remained small, with minimal recognition of *Andromache*, *Children of Heracles*, *Elektra*, *Helen*, *Hekabe*, *Heracles*, *Ion*, *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, *Orestes*, *Phoenician Women*, and *Suppliant Women*. In the 1940s, again according to the APGRD database, *Alcestis* and *Iphigeneia in Tauris* were

staged far less frequently as the repertoire widened out. As is generally acknowledged, *Medea* became the most popular Euripidean play; the APGRD database shows 483 performances of *Medea,* in original, translation, or adaptation, in all the years before 1970, and 492 after 1970. For *Alcestis* the numbers are 224 and 74, and for *Iphigeneia in Tauris*, 235 and 104. Of the other plays that are regularly performed throughout the century, the numbers are: for *Hippolytos*, 187 and 153; for *Trojan Women*, 176 and 254; for *Bacchae*, 81 and 273. After the middle of the century the records start to show a global dimension, with performances of *Medea*, for example, in nine different countries as early as 1953.

There are some indications that the plays of Euripides in particular attract avantgarde productions. A recent commentary notes that "Greek drama is a staple of downtown experimentalism" (Boyle (2009)), but it is perhaps no coincidence that the production under review is of Euripides' *Bacchae*. Some of the directors who have prominently chosen Euripidean dramas in recent years, like Peter Hall (*Bacchae* 2002), JoAnne Akalaitis (*Iphigeneia Cycle* 1999, *Bacchae* 2009) and Katie Mitchell (*Phoenician Women* 1996, *Iphigeneia at Aulis* 2004, *Trojan Women* 2007) are known for their overall commitment to exploring the possibilities of the nonnaturalistic stage, often via Greek drama. In the 1970s and 1980s, the astonishing productions by Yukio Ninigawa (*Medea*), Tadashi Suzuki (*Trojan Women*) and Andrei Serban (*Medea, Trojan Women, Elektra*) drew primarily on Euripidean drama, which they reworked with Eastern performance traditions (Hall, Macintosh, and Taplin (2000), Goff (2009)). These kinds of performances have been especially important in undermining the grip of naturalism, so that spectators now expect, for instance, an appropriate integration of the Chorus, rather than naturalistic discomfort with it. Such performances have made it possible to give weight to ritual elements, to dance, music, and masks—not in order to "return" to Greek conditions but in order to connect with global dramatic traditions—and have made it difficult to maintain that other tradition of "intoning in nighties" (Hazel (2000)). Such productions are likely to use notable special effects, for instance of video, which again will connect not with original conditions but with the theatrical imagination of the Greek play, so enriching current understanding of that very quality. When the Greek plays thus provide blueprints for our contemporary theatrical and performance explorations, they also enable us to rediscover the Greek plays as theater. Reception thus becomes, as several scholars have stated, a way into Greek plays as much as a way out of them (Martindale (1993); Hardwick (2003)). Certainly Euripidean plays often seem better comprehended by staging that does not conform to the conventions of naturalism.

3 Published Adaptations

The last 100plus years have seen writers and dramatists produce numerous innovative versions of Euripidean drama, as of Greek drama in general, in published adaptations. An exhaustive list would be very difficult to compile, but would include the versions by Eugene O'Neill (*Desire under the Elms* [*Hippolytos*]), T.S. Eliot (*The Confidential Clerk* [*Ion*], and *The Cocktail Party* [*Alcestis*]) and the versions of several tragedies by French writers like Sartre, Cocteau, Gide, and Girardoux. In step with the increase in performance, the second half

of the twentieth century saw a huge increase in adaptations of Greek, and Euripidean, tragedy, many of which have themselves attained a status in the literary canon and consequent repeated performance. Landmark adaptations of Euripides would also include the films *Medea* by Pasolini, and the "Greek trilogy" by Cacoyannis of *Iphigeneia, Trojan Women*, and *Elektra* (Michelakis (2006), Bakogianni (2010)). Euripidean tragedy has proved a rich resource for writers in Ireland (Marina Carr, *By the Bog of Cats* [*Medea*], *Ariel* [*Iphigeneia at Aulis*]; Brendan Kennelly, *Medea*, *The Trojan Women*; Brian Friel, *Living Quarters* [*Hippolytos*]; Colin Teevan, *Iph · · ·*; Edna O'Brien, *Iphigenia*) and in postcolonial Africa (Guy Butler, *Demea* [*Medea*]; Efua Sutherland, *Edufa* [*Alcestis*]; Wole Soyinka, *The Bacchae of Euripides*; Femi Osofisan, *The Women of Owu* [*Trojan Women*]). Eastern Europe has also seen a recent upsurge of productions (Stehlíková (2000)). Certain individual writers have had a sustained engagement with Greek tragedy, or Euripides, over a career, such as Robinson Jeffers (*The Cretan Woman*, *Medea*), Tony Harrison (*Medea SexWar*, *Common Chorus*), Charles Mee (*Trojan Women: a Love Story*, *Iphigenia 2.0*, *Orestes 2.0*, *Bacchae 2.1*, *True Love*), Ellen McLaughlin (*Iphigenia and Other Daughters*, *Trojan Women*, *Helen*). Many of the writers listed above also produce adaptations of Aeschylus and Sophocles, but within these bodies of work we can read prominent Euripidean themes that we recognize from previous discussion; war and its aftermath is highly relevant to many, as are the nature of relationships between the sexes and within the family, and there is also a focus on liberatory politics. Since the reception of Greek tragedy generally has attracted such great interest in recent years, many such adaptations are already well discussed; for the second half of this concluding chapter, then, I shall focus on a few adaptations from recent decades which have not been so well canvassed in the existing literature. My research indicates that while individual plays necessarily pursue their own concerns, certain postmodern preoccupations also emerge, such as a readiness to destabilize the notion of "tragedy" with a mordant humor. I read also a continuing engagement with avantgarde theatricality and formal experimentation, dissection of social and political corruption, and a concern with masculinity in its many varieties. Euripidean drama is both remade, and rediscovered, in the image of the twentyfirst century.

Versions of *Hippolytos*, which as we have seen maintains its popularity throughout the twentieth century, have included Tony Harrison's *Phaedra Britannica* (1975) and Brian Friel's *Living Quarters* (1977) which set the doomed family within raceconscious British India and classriven Ireland respectively, developing the Greek play's focus on the purity of Hippolytos into investigation of other forms of estrangement, and arguably increasing the pathos of the father–son relationship. Other more recent versions also shift the emphasis away from Phaedra's illicit desire and embrace a wider social dysfunction. Charles Mee's adaptation, *True Love*, advertises itself as "placed in America's trailer trash world, in which Phaedra does not restrain herself from sleeping with her fourteen year old stepson, and all the townspeople sit around the gas station talking about the extraordinary relationships they have had or known of, living in their normal world—each of them as true a love as human beings are capable of".[1] Part of Mee's episodic exploration of love and its relation to sexuality, the play is part also of his exploration of possible contemporary relationships to Greek classics, which has led to what we might call his mashup manifesto: "Recently, I have come again and

again to take the text of a classic Greek play, smash it to ruins, and then, atop its ruined structure of plot and character, write a new play, with allnew language, characters of today speaking like people of today, set in the America of my time—so that America today lies, as it were, in a bed of ancient ruins" (Mee (1999) 214). Throughout his oeuvre, his texts are made up of parts from other texts, rejecting any notion of an "author" in favor of a "culture" which speaks through the characters without the characters' knowing it:

> [W]e often express our histories and cultures in ways even we are not conscious of · · · the culture speaks through us, grabs us and throws us to the ground, cries out, silences us.[2]

True Love is set in a garage "in the boondocks" (Mee (2005) 221) where the Theseusfigure, Richard, has apparently abandoned his wife Polly and teenage son Edward because the car broke down; he is off on business somewhere but his return is imminently expected. A disembodied authority voice is provided by the radio show which is heard at the start of the play, in which a discussion about love channels Plato's *Symposium* through a series of vacuous exchanges between host and guests. A "Chorus" of sorts is formed of neighbors who gather at the garage to work and talk about love, sex, the differences between men and women, and their relation to a definition of humanity. They also play music, sing, and dance regularly, in a variety of more and less appropriate styles. They pass judgement on the protagonists—sometimes much more scathing judgements than is characteristic of a Greek Chorus—and they can be very funny, especially when statements of private desires become so outrageous that even other members of the "Chorus" balk at them. In the 2001 production, however, an audience member was found who would consent to join in with some of the less dangerous sexual activities (Sommer (2001)). As the play unfurls, the topics are raised of incestuous abuse of children, and of selfharm, so that Edward's outburst against adult sexuality and its many perversions seems eminently reasonable rather than an antisocial rant of the kind we associate with the Greek Hippolytos.

Stepmother and stepson have consensual sex in the abandoned car, at which point Richard returns, to shoot Polly and himself, but in a reprise of the radio show at the end of the play we hear that they all survived and now live in neighboring trailers, Polly with Edward, and Richard next door. "That's a love story," comments the host (275), and we may conclude that the postmodern vision delivers a world in which people are so alienated and estranged, speaking words that are not their own, that any human connection is worth celebrating.

Daniel Fish's production of this play in 2001 was praised for its "grunge vaudeville," with music, dance, and audience involvement prominent elements of the staging (Sommer (2001)). Other recent avantgarde productions have interpreted *Hippolytos* in terms of excess or minimalism: the Kannada version in verse by Raghunandana, based on the English translation by Robert Bagg, staged by the State Theater of South India at La Mama in New York in 1992, was so theatrically intense that "exploration of the text" was rendered impossible by overwhelming musical, electronic, and lighting effects (Bruckner (1992)). By contrast, a production by Silviu Purcarete in 1995 was set in a moonlit landscape through which Artemis and Aphrodite prowled, the one wrapped in white bandages that obscured her eyes and the other a "primitive predator" obscured by bushy hair (Taylor (1995)). The most controversial

of recent productions or adaptations, however, is that by Sarah Kane.

Taking alienation to hitherto unexplored regions, Sarah Kane's first play, *Blasted*, was so controversial in its representation of outré violence that *Phaedra's Love* came with a great weight of negative expectation, which was for many viewers fulfilled. Kane's published interviews suggest that she came to *Phaedra* by Seneca almost by accident, and claim that she did not read Euripides until after composing *Phaedra's Love* (Saunders (2002) 72), but I assume here that *Phaedra's Love* forms part of the reception of Euripides. It is a challenging drama; not only are its violence and obscenity highly provocative, but generically it stirs a lot of humor into its ostensibly tragic situation, and formally it moves from being a "chamber piece," with no more than two actors in each scene, to a crowd scene full of action and gore (Saunders (2002) 136). Critically distrusted at its premiere in 1996 (Hall (1996), Spencer (1996)), *Phaedra's Love* has been performed across the world nearly thirty times since then[3] and has been heralded as possessing a "classical" sensibility (Saunders (2002) 19) as well as distilling some of the essence of late twentiethcentury Britain.

The stage directions of *Phaedra's Love* ask very searching questions, fully in the tradition of Euripides and Seneca, about sight and perception. These directions also point to the literary dimension of the play, because of course they are not available to a theatrical audience. When the stage directions order that Strophe be raped on stage, Theseus cut his throat and bleed to death, and Hippolytos be castrated, disemboweled, stoned, kicked, and finally eaten by vultures, they challenge the actual possibilities of staging, but offer imaginative possibilities to readers. While reviews of the Gate premiere in 1996, directed by Kane, suggest that the execution of Hippolytos was carried out naturalistically (Bassett 1996), subsequent productions have found other means; one solved the problem by having Phaedra return from the dead to narrate the final scene, including the stage directions (Saunders (2002) 136), and another showed the final scene as a video (Théatre de la Bastille[4]). Earlier stage directions pose questions of a different kind, but test actors and audience alike; Hippolytos masturbates into his sock but "comes without a flicker of pleasure" (Kane (2001) 65), and similarly when Phaedra performs oral sex on him, he watches TV and eats sweets throughout, reaching orgasm without taking his eyes off the television (81). At some level, then, we are invited to conclude that he is not "coming" at all, and certainly we do not expect the actor to experience orgasm, but to act; the sex and violence that characterize Kane's dramaturgy and provoked the early hostile reactions to her work should perhaps be understood as part of an exploration of form and artifice, even though they also work as an intimation of utter alienation (Saunders (2002) 7–12).

The estranged quality of the form is perhaps connected to the yawning moral vacuum that most commentators read in the play. Incest is the least of the play's worries; there is no concealment of Phaedra's lust and very little concern about it. Both the doctor and her daughter Strophe are well aware of her desire and tell her to get over it (Kane (2001) 68, 72). The daughter Strophe, who is not in the Euripidean play, runs the place in Theseus' absence (67) and is arguably more useful and interesting than the other characters, but the play's focus has shifted overall to Hippolytos, a fat, unwashed young man who spends his days eating, watching TV, playing with his new remote control car, and having sex, usually with strangers. He seems to

conform to the Euripidean parameters only insofar as he rejects love and its entanglement with other subjectivities; he seems to despise everyone connected with him, including all the loyal subjects who send him presents on his royal birthday, and he has bought himself the car because that is the only way he can be sure of receiving what he wants. Euripidean purity has mutated into isolation and solipsism, and even Phaedra's freely offered sexual services cannot move him to any reciprocity. While in some ways this nonreciprocal scenario is familiar from every lived instance of unrequited love, Hippolytos' state of mind is also symptomatic of the society he inhabits, where the authority figures like doctor and priest, let alone king, are corrupt and useless. Within this moral wasteland the "ordinary people," who gather in the last scene, are arguably the worst; caught up in enthusiasm for the violence inflicted on Hippolytos, they are the image of the audience, and in the UK premiere which Kane directed, they were played by people who up until that moment had indeed sat among the audience undetected (Spencer (1996)). The nihilistic vision of the play is perhaps partly redeemed by the surprisingly sacrificial contours of Hippolytos' acquiescence in the rape accusation and in his death. It is also perhaps modified by the comic elements; Kane apparently called this play her "comedy," and others have remarked on its wicked humor (Barfield (2006)), which is achieved partly by the frequent collisions among rhetorical and imagistic registers, and partly by Hippolytos' own sardonic commentary on events—of which the last line, "If there could have been more moments like this," is only the most resonant example.

While *Hippolytos* has enjoyed regular performance or adaptation throughout the last hundred years, in the case of *Iphigeneia at Aulis* the APGRD database shows an increasing number of performances until its popularity dwarfs that of *Iphigeneia in Tauris* entirely. Hall (2005) persuasively argues that this phenomenon is due to an increased awareness of society's vulnerability to rhetoric and "spin" in the context of unwanted and incomprehensible wars. Current versions of *Iphigeneia at Aulis* are thus often focused on the political corruption that takes women as its victims and, moreover, enlists them in their own destruction; this was legible in the acclaimed production by Katie Mitchell at the National Theatre, London, in 2004, where the play seemed to be set in a vaguely 1940s period and the Chorus women were particularly effective as they slowly went to pieces, chainsmoking nervously, in the face of the inexorable plot. The version by Mee, produced at least three times since 2007 (in New York, Chicago, and Santa Barbara), is perhaps more equivocal, giving more plausible reasons for the death of Iphigenia. In this adaptation the soldiers, not the gods, have insisted that Agamemnon sacrifice his daughter, in order to show that he understands the nature of the losses that they will inevitably endure. Although the play opens with a long and highly selfaware monologue by Agamemnon, a clinical dissection of the contradictions of empire, the play quickly descends to a bizarre series of lists from popular culture, combining honeymoon destinations, descriptions of bachelorette parties, etiquette manuals, leadership training manuals, First World War poetry, and lists of soldiers' treats—from pornography, through corned beef hash, to baby name books—in an apparent attempt to empty all forms of language of meaning. As so often in Mee, men are ranged against women, here the soldiers against Iphigenia's bridesmaids, in moments both affectionate and hostile, but Iphigenia's closing speech claims both a meaningfulness to her language and the right of women to be heroes too

rather than to “Stay at home and make a decision/about the draperies in the bedroom.”[5] After she leads Agamemnon off to the sacrifice, soldiers and bridesmaids celebrate a wedding that turns into a “big party riot murder war,” suggesting the unhealed nature of the violence to come. Only the reentry of Agamemnon with the bloodied body of his daughter can stop the party.

Other versions of Iphigeneia develop the “victim of spin” interpretation in different directions. Ellen McLaughlin’s *Iphigenia in Aulis* contains no action, being a “minimalist dance” ((2005) 3) but traces Iphigenia’s rational, intellectual workingout of her situation, which is contrasted to Clytemnestra’s anger and sarcasm. By having only the two female characters on stage, the play sidelines the Greek men and their input into the situation, and it is in *Iphigenia in Tauris* instead that Iphigenia immolates herself for the male, saving Orestes by becoming the statue that he must rescue. Caridad Svich’s *Iphigenia Crash Land Falls on The Neon Shell That Was Once Her Heart* is probably one of the most avantgarde adaptations of Euripidean tragedy in recent years, and intriguingly, it was first workshopped with Mee (Svich (2005) 333). The play is set in a South American rave culture where Iphigenia must learn to sacrifice herself in order to assure the reelection of her father, the General, who is already responsible for the torture and murder of numerous other citizens. Unaware at first of his history, Iphigenia meets people who inform her, and her death is also placed in the context of the “fresa girls,” the dozens of anonymous young women who have, as a matter of historical record, been found murdered in Ciudad Juárez (Svich (2005) 347). Instead of them, the General’s victim Violeta Imperial says “We need someone to mourn for, Iphigenia. We need a girl we can look up to” (368). The “fresa girls” are here played by men, and conversely Achilles is a beautiful, androgynous, drugged rock star who features at the rave club. Iphigenia’s mother hates her, and her baby brother Orestes, already addicted to coca, is kept in a Gucci shoebox (370). Vividly fragmented, the play makes full use of video and TV projections, numerous genres of music, and language that is jagged and hallucinatory.

One of the most acclaimed recent versions of *Iphigeneia at Aulis* is Barry Unsworth’s novel *Songs of the Kings* (2002). Although the topic of novelization of Greek tragedies is very enticing (Hall (2009) is a recent study), reasons of space dictate a briefer account than would be ideal. The novel deploys multiple conflicting viewpoints in a kind of parody of dramatic form, and in its alertness to corruption and rhetorical deceit it aligns itself with the deadly skewering sensibility that we can read in the Euripidean *Iphigeneia at Aulis*. Like many other recent adaptations, it is very willing to draw out the humor in the tragic situations that it examines, which here is largely provided, unknowingly, by the figure of the Ajaxes Larger and Lesser. As does Euripidean drama, the novel perverts all the heroic figures inherited from epic, so that the “Kings” of the title, the Greek leaders in front of Troy, are exposed as morally bankrupt gangsters who are at war in pursuit of degradingly material gains. The sole figure who might command readers’ respect at the opening of the novel, Calchas, emerges as thoroughly compromised by the ending. As a soothsayer, he has the task of closely examining the nature of the work of interpretation, and it is part of the novel’s humor, directed this time at the reader, that intellectual activity itself is shown to have such corrosive moral effects.

Salvation of a sort comes from the east and from women. The priests of Zeus among the Greeks are working for the downfall of the female divinity, Artemis, who is worshipped by Iphigeneia

as priestess in Mycenae. With her to assist in the rites is her Lydian slave girl Sisipyla, who as the most clearsighted of the characters, although the most overlooked, eventually devises the plan to save Iphigeneia. As with the Euripidean play, Iphigeneia at first resists the idea of her death and then is reconciled to it, but here less by a realization of the types of heroism open to females, as in Mee, and more by an obtuse acquiescence in the deceit that she has been fed both by the Greek leaders and by the legends surrounding her family. These she, unlike Sisipyla, has accepted unreservedly. The plan to save Iphigeneia turns, as with Racine's version, on the existence of a double, but in a final twist it is the double who escapes, contradicting Racine's decorum and abandoning the princess to a fate that now seems deserved.

While *Iphigeneia at Aulis* has achieved significant exposure in the last twenty years or so, *Bacchae* rose in popularity in the second half of the twentieth century and has exerted serious dominance for some fifty years, as the APGRD database shows, and as several recent discussions examine (Hall, Macintosh, and Wrigley (2004), Mills (2006)). The play was a major hit of the 2007 Edinburgh Festival in a version by David Greig, from a literal translation by Ian Ruffell. It was directed by John Tiffany and featured Alan Cumming as Dionysos. The production later went to the Lyric Hammersmith in London and to the Lincoln Center Festival, and in 2010 the Greig translation was also performed at the Abbey Theatre, St Albans, by the Company of Ten. Several aspects of the Edinburgh production which gripped the attention of audiences and reviewers are highly representative of threads in the recent reception of Euripides. The first is that the production deliberately unearthed all possible humor in the Euripidean version, to emerge as a drama that challenged generic boundaries as well as boundaries of other kinds (Foley (2010)). It brought out the comic potential of the scene between Cadmus and Teiresias by playing them as musichall artistes, nodding perhaps to one of Cumming's earlier incarnations as half of the duo Victor and Barry, and also perhaps to a similar staging in Soyinka's *The Bacchae of Euripides* (1974). The scenes between Pentheus and Dionysos, not only the transvestite scene but the earlier ones too, were also fraught with excruciating jokes. Several commentators noted that the humor of the earlier scenes provided a strong contrast with Agave's grief during the closing moments (Walker (2007)), although others felt that the transition was more of a letdown (Isherwood (2008); Dziemianowicz (2008)). The humor can be read in Greig's translation, which is colloquial and witty, and which plays especially on any opportunity for sexual innuendo, willing to up the camp quotient wherever possible (Burnett (2007)). The notion of "camp" is perhaps central to the production, because of its joint reference to queer sensibility and to lavish theatricality, both of which the production had in spades.

To take the theatrical first: the production was marked by a number of coups, including Dionysos' initial entrance upside down, in a gold lamé skirt which fell to reveal the actor's bare buttocks—a sight that challenged the audience with signification sexual, comic, and insulting all at once, beginning the play with an element of the Aristophanes that this Euripides frequently channeled. This opening was remarked on in all reviews, but other memorable coups included Dionysos' magically producing flowers to decorate Semele's grave (Dziemianowicz (2008)), and the white walls round the stage catching fire in a way that

apparently threatened the audience (Walker (2007); Spencer (2007)). Another important component of this production's selfconfident and selfaware theatricality was the Chorus, which was composed of black women in glamorous red evening gowns. This Chorus was much praised for its powerful singing and dancing, of which video clips available on the web give a flavor. Dionysos refers to these as his backing band (Greig (2007a) 9), but comparisons to the Supremes perhaps detracted a little from their impact (Isherwood (2008)). In other accounts the Chorus share the honors with the protagonist for casting the "spell" (Spencer (2007)).

The virtuoso performance of Dionysos by Alan Cumming was undoubtedly part of what made this *Bacchae* such a resounding critical success. Reviews suggest a very personal, visceral response to the highly sexualized, androgynous performance, with one reviewer confessing that he found it "utterly irresistible" (Spencer (2007)). Elsewhere Cumming's Dionysos is described as charismatic, magnetic, seductive, enticing, mischievous, sly, teasing, satyrlike, playful, and enigmatic, with saucer eyes, subtle sneers, and a foxlike or mocking smile—with the ability to display "power in its most lethal guise" (Greene (2008)) and to make us believe in his power (Nightingale (2007)). The submission to the god thus enacted by audience and critical response is absolutely appropriate, but it perhaps raises interesting questions about the relationship between the performance and the performer. Several reviews make the point that the actor, biographically, is not unlike the god he portrays, insofar as he is known for his equivocal sexuality. He has outed himself as a gay man and has been married at different times to a woman and to a man (Cavendish (2007)). With a reputation as a party animal, he has also made a career out of challenging Scots stereotypes via the camp characters he has played, of which the high point before the *Bacchae* was probably his awardwinning Emcee in Cabaret ("cousin" to his Dionysos according to Nightingale (2007)). In discussing his *Bacchae* he is explicit in making connections to the Dionysiac elements of his own life (Cavendish (2007)):

> As a person, I'm very like Dionysus. I understand the importance of letting go. I'm a bit of flagflier for trying to make people feel comfortable about things they might feel ashamed of. I don't think that's about me going away and having an epiphany. I think I've always been like that.

In similar vein, he makes the connection between Dionysos' return from exile and his own sixteenyear absence from the Scottish stage (Cavendish (2007)), suggesting that part of the play's appeal is simply to notions of family and belonging. Despite this critical emphasis on Cumming's individual performance, he also embraces the collective nature of the Dionysiac, and theatrical, enterprise. In the interview with Dominic Cavendish both he and John Tiffany stress that it is impossible to go home after a performance; Dionysos can't settle down with a cup of cocoa but must go out and party. When Cavendish pictures them gathering their own band as they walk down Lothian Road, Cumming and Tiffany are delighted: "We should get an old doubledecker and drive round town picking people up. The Bacchae bus!" (Cavendish (2007)).

So seamlessly is Cumming's performance connected to Cumming, it appears, that when the translation was staged in St Albans, the lead actor had also to be a "professional stripper" in order to continue the kind of outrageousness that Cumming specializes in.[6] There may be an

incipient contradiction in the notion of a liberatory god who turns out to be confined to certain representations, enthralling though they are. This leads me to another aspect of this *Bacchae* which seems to deserve comment, and that is its focus on the male. Both Greig and Cumming, in published interviews, claim that the *Bacchae* and indeed Greek theater generally is deeply preoccupied with masculinity, its maintenance, and its discontents. Greig (2007b) is representative:

> Greek tragedies would be performed in the daytime, in the open air, to an audience of up to 15,000 men. By all accounts these audiences were noisy and participative. Fifteen thousand men—that's basically a football match· · ·. How many of those 15,000 men would see themselves in Pentheus? How many would feel uneasy about seeing this parody of masculinity and femininity played out in front of them, blurring boundaries? This moment, for me, holds the key to the contemporary meaning of *The Bacchae*. It is a play by a man, about men, for men.

While at one level this is not news, insofar as many productions and adaptations have held Pentheus' equivocal sexuality in their sights as well as that of Dionysos, at another level it may represent a move to downplay Greek tragedy's intimate concern with the role and identity of women. We might speculate that plays can manage only one "liberation" at a time, so that if the gay or camp sensibility is to be given free rein by the production, as here, then a concern with the female will take a back seat. Analogously, in this production, the fact that the Chorus members were all black, whereas the named actors were white, might have attracted comment. The idea that black skin color can stand in for eastern exoticism, or otherness generally, might be thought to require more nuanced statement.

JoAnne Akalaitis's production in New York in 2009 was from the translation by Nicholas Rudall, but seemed to connect with the production of Greig/Tiffany because the actor who played Dionysos, Jonathan Groff, was known as both gay and very beautiful (Als (2009)). His performance began with him selecting a costume from a hoard which included clothes for women as well as for men, thus acting out Greig's lines ((2007a) 7), which have no parallel in Euripides:

For your benefit I appear

In human form. Like you. Fleshy.

Man? Woman?—it was a closerun thing.

I chose man. What do you think?

The actor playing Pentheus was black, which reportedly caused some unease during the transvestite scene, since a black man in drag had connotations of minstrelsy that seemed at odds with the avowedly avantgarde nature of Akalaitis' work (Als (2009)). Overall, reviewers seemed to find Akalaitis' *Bacchae* somewhat stilted and less challenging than her body of work would suggest, which in itself might suggest that the Euripidean play is right at home in the avantgarde (Brown (2009)).

Perhaps the most avantgarde, and indeed postmodern, production in 2009 was that of the Rude Mechanicals in Austin, Texas, who staged a reenactment of The Performance Group's legendary 1968 experimental adaptation of *The Bacchae*, *Dionysus in 69*. This is the production, as staged by Richard Schechner and filmed by Brian de Palma, which provides the starting point for Hall, Macintosh, and Wrigley's volume *Dionysus since 69*. Part of the avowed reason for the Rudes' enterprise was the fact that "because all performances are ephemeral, and avantgarde performances even more so, most people never experience these germinal works [of the 60s, 70s and 80s]".[7] The drive for authenticity, which would be impossible, and undesirable, in the case of an actual Greek tragedy, led the Rudes to invite Richard Schechner along in order to help them in their realization (Faires (2009)). Despite the potential for mechanical homage in this conceit, reviews praise the actors' skill and their conjuring up of a spirit of revolution and playfulness. One review (van Ryzin (2009)) also notes that it was events like Schechner's *Dionysus in 69* which gave birth to the contemporary theater's new conventions, such as audience participation and the absence of the "fourth wall," thereby implicitly aligning Euripidean drama with radical practices in theater as well as in the culture at large. As the twentieth century turned into the twentyfirst, Euripides and his avatars remained an important part of our understanding of our modernity.

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FURTHER READING

Classical reception is a relatively young field, although it is growing very quickly, and many of the important books and articles to read on reception of Euripides are already in the Works Cited. In this Further Reading section I suggest a few other books that will allow the reader to approach the twentieth and twentyfirst reception of Euripides from different angles.

In the Duckworth series of *Companions to Greek and Roman Tragedy*, ten Euripidean dramas have been covered, and each volume includes a section on reception; the plays discussed so far are *Medea*, *Bacchae*, *Hippolytos*, *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, *Ion*, *Helen*, *Trojan Women*, *Phoenician Women*, and *Suppliant Women*. A useful book from a slightly earlier date, McDonald (1992), has several essays on different adaptations of Euripides, and some very useful, fascinating interviews with theater practitioners like Tony Harrison. Hartigan (1995) is more of a narrative history, and of course is confined to the USA, but it is very interesting in the performance histories which it unearths and in the contemporary comments by theater critics which it includes. The plays of Euripides are perennially important to this account.

Patsalidis and Sakellaridou (1999), a large international collection of essays on Greek drama in the modern world, which pays particular attention to theater practice. Among the Euripidean plays which feature in the analyses are *Medea*, *Bacchae*, *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, *Trojan Women*, and *Herakles*. For those who read German, Flashar's magisterial overview was updated and reissued in 2009.

A different kind of study is Goldhill (2007). In this, Goldhill looks at elements of Greek tragedy which present difficulties for modern stagings, but in considering how recent directors have tacked these difficulties, he sheds light on the characteristics of Greek drama. The plays of Euripides are prominent among his discussions.

The Classical Reception Project at the Open University (*Classical Receptions in Drama and Poetry in English from c.1970 to the Present*) has a useful website on which are published several very relevant discussions of the reception and staging of classical dramas, including those of Euripides. The homepage http://www2.open.ac.uk/ClassicalStudies/GreekPlays/index.html, accessed September 2010), has links to various kinds of publication including critical essays, conference papers, and e journals.

NOTES

1 http://www.charlesmee.org/plays.shtml#other.

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3 Database at http://www.iainfisher.com/kane.

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A COMPANION TO EURIPIDES

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